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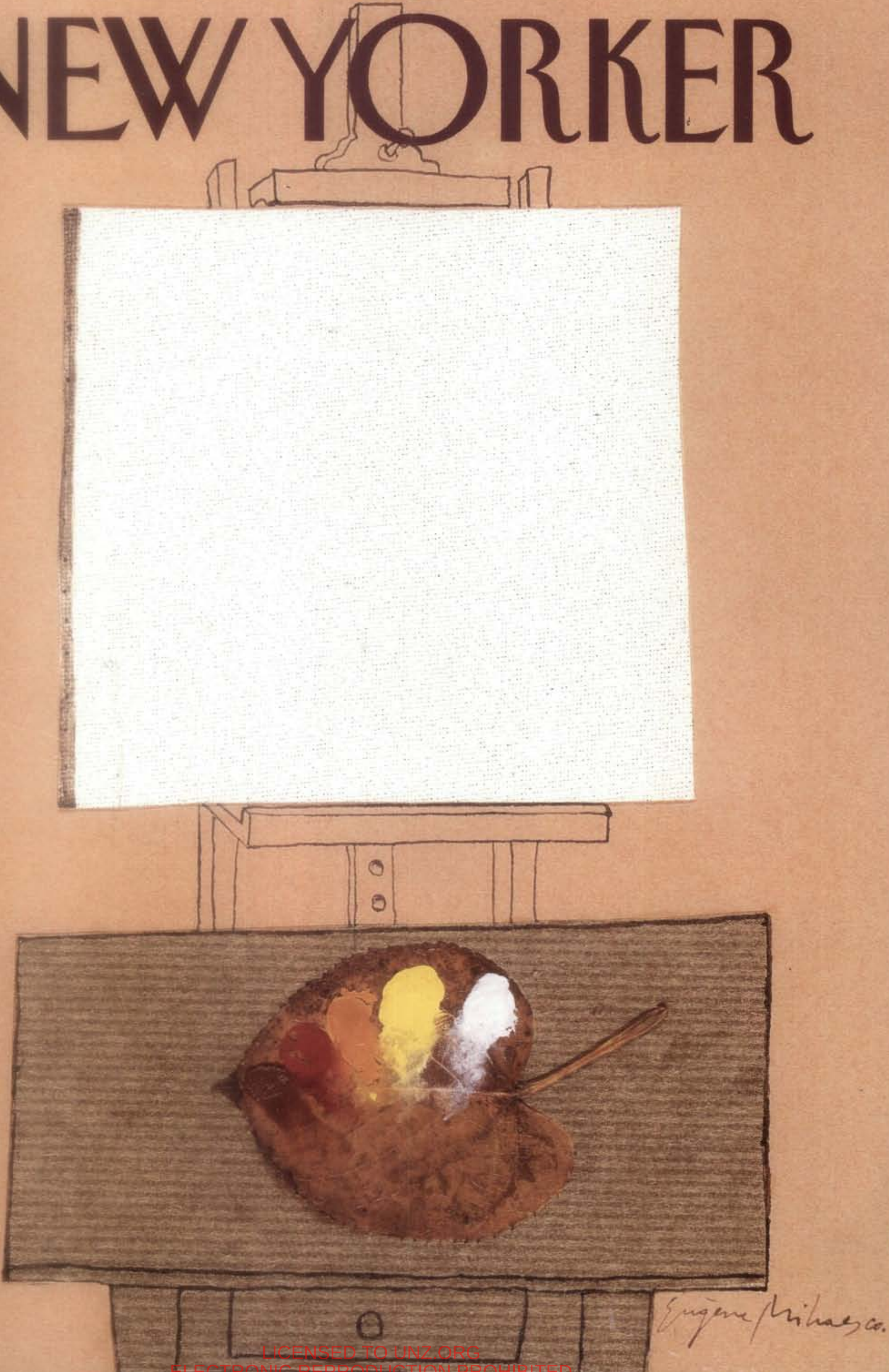
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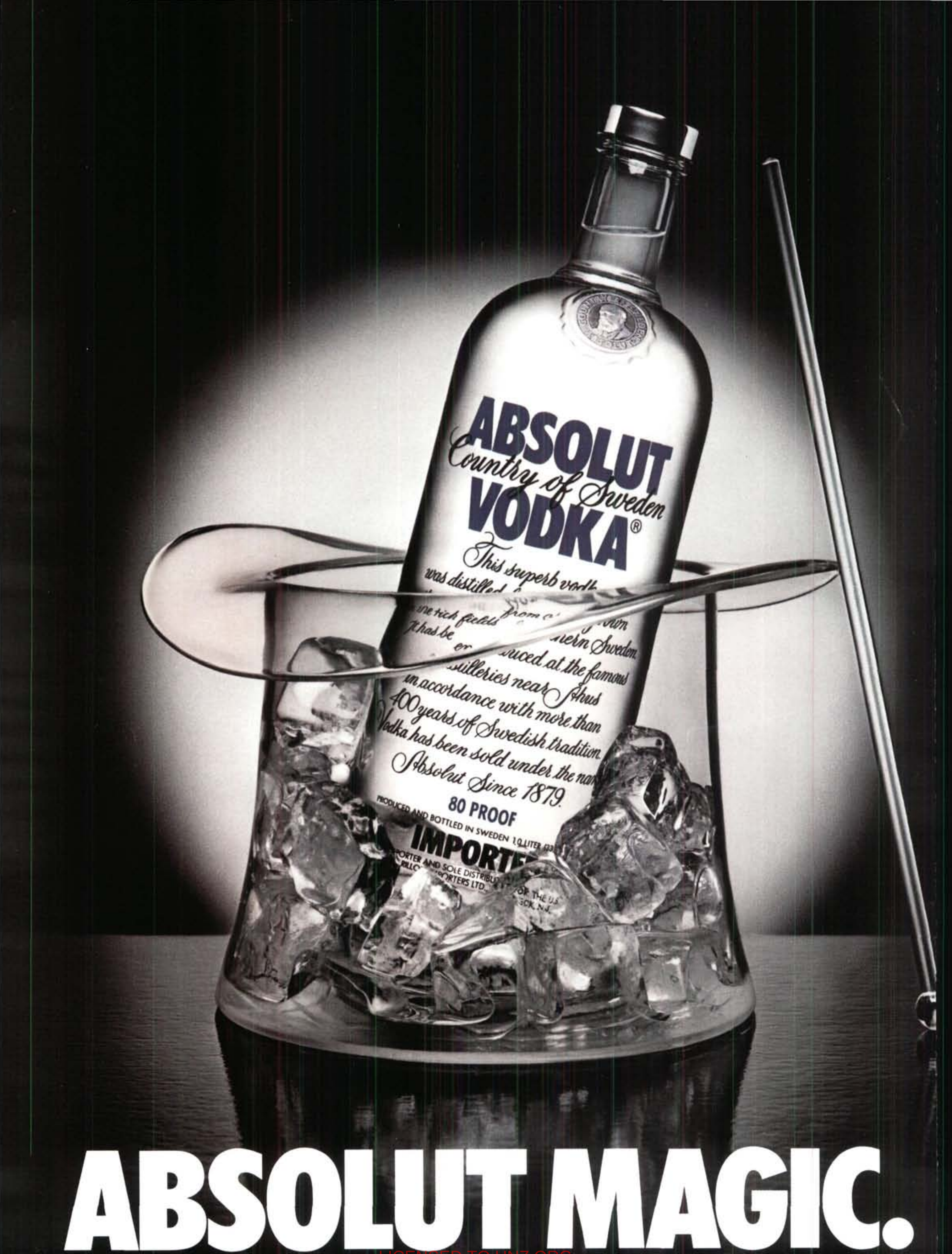
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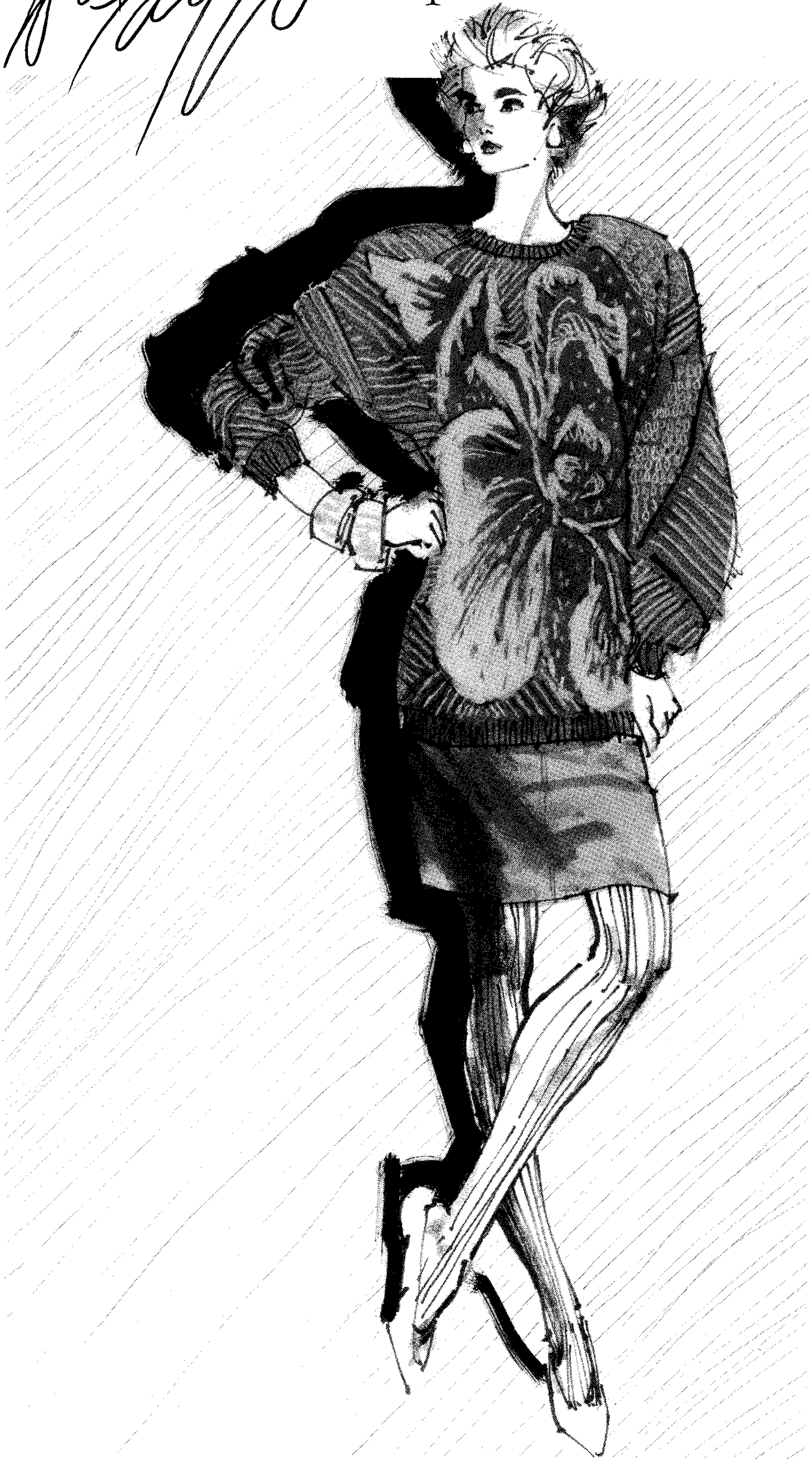

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Abingdon Square—A play by Maria Irene Fornes. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 247-0393. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct 25.)

Anything Goes—Cole Porter's 1934 musical, directed by Jerry Zaks. Cast members include Patti LuPone and Anthony Heald. The original book was written by Guy Bolton, P. G. Wodehouse, Howard Lindsay, and Russel Crouse; new contributions to the book have been made by Timothy Crouse and John Weidman. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Bouncers—John Godber's disagreeable comedy about working-class men and women at a disco in the North of England. Dan Gerrity, Gerrit Graham, Anthony M. LaPaglia, and Adrian Paul constitute the entire cast, and they play any number of roles, male and female. Ron Link was the director. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/5/87.) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18-22 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Mondays through Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 8 and 11; and Saturdays at 7 and 10.)

Burn This—Lanford Wilson's play can be considered an occasion for an astonishing (if not especially convincing) performance by John Malkovich, as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. The supporting actors—Joan Allen, Jonathan Hogan, and Lou Liberatore—are very good. Marshall W. Mason was the able director, and the distinguished setting was designed by John Lee Beatty and lighted by Dennis Parichy. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Cabaret—Joel Grey returns to his role as the Master of Ceremonies in a revival of the 1966 musical, directed by Harold Prince. Previews Wednesday, Oct. 21. Opens officially on Thursday, Oct. 22. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Circle Repertory Company—Rafael Lima's play **el salvador**, about a group of television journalists in that embattled country, is short on substance, but his characters are credible, and the lines they speak sound authentic, and are often funny. John Bishop directed the capable actors. (Reviewed in this issue.) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Circumstances—A one-man show written and performed by Louis Mustillo. Opens Wednesday, Oct. 21. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 691-7641. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Don't Get God Started—A gospel musical with a score and lyrics by Marvin Winans and a book by Ron Milner, who also directs. Previews through Wednesday, Oct. 28. Opens officially on Thursday, Oct. 29. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30; opening-night curtain at 6. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Dreamgirls—A revival of Michael Bennett's 1981 musical. Tom Eyen wrote the book and lyrics, and Henry Krieger wrote the music. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

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Driving Miss Daisy—Alfred Uhry's play is more a sentimental than a dramatic occasion, which tells, in a series of brief scenes, of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. What gives the evening distinction is the performance—the fine acting of Dana Ivey and Morgan Freeman, under Ron Lagomarsino's direction. (4/27/87) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Fences—August Wilson's play about a black garbageman, formerly a baseball player of professional calibre, is as powerful as, and even richer than, his "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." The triumphant performance, with James Earl Jones in the leading role, supported by Mary Alice, Courtney B. Vance, Frankie R. Faison, Ray Aranha, Charles Brown, and Karima Miller, was directed by Lloyd Richards. (4/6/87) (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

From the Mississippi Delta—A play by Endesha Ida Mae Holland. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand Street. Thursday through Sunday at 7:30. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 25. For information about tickets, call 869-3981.)

Jackie Mason's "The World According to Me!"—Jackie Mason's material consists almost entirely of outrageous insults addressed to Jews, Italians, Poles, Puerto Ricans, and Wasps. For more than thirty years, Mason's audiences—that is, his victims—have found him hilarious, and the sorry truth of the matter is that he *is* hilarious. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—A twenty-six-member company presenting **give my regards to broadway**, a musical loosely adapted from George M. Cohan's "Little Johnny Jones." (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2, and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.)

Les Misérables—Colm Wilkinson is a strong Jean Valjean and Terrence Mann is his strong pursuer Javert in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, which comes to us from France by way of England. The real standouts of the production, however, are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. But even these, remarkable though they are, are not sustaining enough for the three and a half hours that the show runs. (3/23/87) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.)

Moms—A celebration of the great black come-

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

dienne Moms Mabley, as impersonated by Clarice Taylor. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Mort Sahl on Broadway!—For anyone who doesn't know what he thinks about politics and the state of the world, this one-man hour-and-forty-minute show by the veteran monologuist and standup comic will be a delight. For anyone who thinks he knows what he thinks and likes thinking so, it may prove a nightmare. The moral thrust of Sahl's satire flits about—like Socrates' gadfly—settling now here, now there, but never long enough for one to swat it or slap it down. The show is a kind of one-man Aristophanic comedy; it leaves you laughing—uplifted because it is so refreshing—but not knowing where to turn for comfort or help. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Nov. 1.)

The Nerd—This farce by the late Larry Shue (author of "The Foreigner") is a source of laughter from beginning to end. It tells the story of an idiotic young man who almost becomes the permanent house guest of an inoffensive architect. Robert Joy gives a first-rate comic performance in the title role. (4/6/87) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Of Mice and Men—John Savage and Jay Patterson co-star in a revival of Steinbeck's 1937 play, based on his novel. Previews Wednesday, Oct. 21. Opens officially on Thursday, Oct. 22, and will run through Sunday, Nov. 29. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2.)

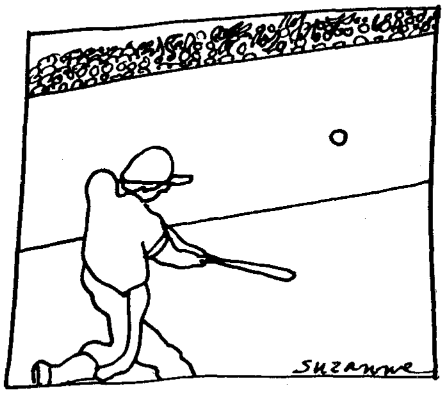
Psycho Beach Party—This romp through early-sixties beach-blanket movies, written by Charles Busch—and significantly funnier than Mr. Busch's earlier work—uses the conventions of drag comedy to lampoon the mores and assumptions of heterosexual behavior. The production—which stars Mr. Busch as a Gidget-like figure with a Marnie-like problem—is directed by Kenneth Elliott and includes a dance number that may single-handedly bring back the limbo. (8/10/87) (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Rosie's Cafe—This play by R. A. Shiomi, presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, amounts to a full-length prologue to his delightful "Yellow Fever," of four years ago. The time is the early fifties, the setting is the Japanese section of Vancouver, and Sam Shikaze, super detective, has just graduated from the police academy. As again portrayed by Donald Li, he is as engaging as ever, and so is Carol A. Honda, who returns as a young and lovesick Rosie. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playhouse 46, at 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2. Closes Saturday, Nov. 7.)

Sherlock's Last Case—A relentlessly jokey entry in the Baker Street files that is more tiresome than funny. Frank Langella is Holmes, Donal Donnelly is Watson. (8/31/87) (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Starlight Express—A bore on roller skates. (3/30/87) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Steel Magnolias—The setting of this first play by Robert Harling is a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, and much of the content is the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. A rather pathetic story is told as well. The performances are good, especially those of Betsy Aidem, Rosemary Prinz, and Kate Wilkinson. The impressive setting was designed by Edward T. Gianfrancesco; Pamela Berlin directed. (8/17/87) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays, except Oct. 31, at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3; special matinées Wednesday, Oct. 28, and Saturday, Oct. 31, at 2.)



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Talk Radio—A strong and funny play by Eric Bogosian, with Larry Pine as the scornful host of a phone-in radio talk show. (6/8/87) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Year of the Duck—A new play by Israel Horovitz. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**BROADWAY BOUND:** A touching and unexpectedly serious study of a family—presumably the playwright's—as it begins to fall apart in Brooklyn in the nineteen-forties. Neil Simon retains his accustomed skill at comedy but has wisely suppressed his weakness for surefire gags. Gene Saks directed. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Mondays through Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LA CAGE AUX FOLLES:** A big, handsomely designed and handsomely costumed musical. The book, by Harvey Fierstein, is sentimental nonsense, but the music, by Jerry Herman, is pleasantly tuneful. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **CATS:** A musical version of T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats." Score by Andrew Lloyd Webber, choreography by Gillian Lynne, and direction (and some lyrics) by Trevor Nunn. A superb spectacle, which may run for many more years and give cats the right to vote and hold office. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **COASTAL DISTURBANCES:** Tina Howe's funny and beautiful play about love is set on a private beach on Massachusetts' North Shore. Carole Rothman was the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 11,440 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** Pleasantly old-fashioned choreography by the late Gower Champion and a few classic songs enliven an otherwise inert pastiche of the Warner Brothers movie that made Ruby Keeler a star. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **I'M NOT RAPPAPORT:** Judd Hirsch and Cleavon Little star in Herb Gardner's synthetic, though often entertaining, comedy about two old men who share a bench in Central Park. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS:** Based on Roger Corman's 1960 horror quickie about a man-eating plant, this exuberant, jokey musical is wholly free of camp. The score is by Alan Menken, and Howard Ashman directed and wrote the book and lyrics. Martin P. Robinson designed the menacing plant. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** A silly chestnut of a British musical, dating back to the thirties. With Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302. Mondays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

Next Wave Festival—At the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. **COMPAGNIE MAGUY MARIN**—"Eden": Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 21-22, at 8. . . . ¶ "Babel Babel": Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24, at 8, and Sunday, Oct. 25, at 2. . . . **"SWING,"** a new work by Elizabeth Swados—Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 2 and 8; and Sundays at 2 (through Sunday, Nov. 1). . . . ¶ At BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., about a block east of Flatbush Ave. **"THE MAHABHARATA"**—Performances this week are on Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 21-22; Saturday, Oct. 24; Tuesday through Thursday, Oct. 27-29; and Saturday, Oct. 31. The schedule is complicated; our best advice is to call the box office. (The box-office number for the festival is 1-718 636-4100. Through Sunday, Jan. 3.)

Julie Wilson: From Weill to Sondheim (A Concert)—The singer, with accompanist William Roy. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays, except Friday, Oct. 23, at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Thuli in Concert—Thuli Dumakude performing traditional and contemporary songs of black South Africa. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Saturdays at 10:30 P.M. and Sundays at 6.)

La Serva Amorosa—The 1752 comedy by Carlo Goldini, performed by an Italian company that includes Anna Maria Guarnieri. With English supertitles. (Mark Hellinger, 237 W. 51st St. 757-7064. Tuesday through Thursday, Oct. 27-29, at 8.)

DANCE

Martha Graham Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement—Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 8: "Temptations of the Moon," "Celebration," "Night Journey," and "Appalachian Spring." . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 22, at 8: "Tangled Night," "Persephone," and "Judith." . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 23, at 8: "Judith," "Persephone," and "Acts of Light." . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 24, at 2: "Circe," "Heretic," "Night Journey," and "Appalachian Spring." . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8: "Canticle for Innocent Comedians," "Persephone," and "The Rite of Spring." . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 25, at 2: "Circe," "Heretic," "Judith," and "Tangled Night." . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 25, at 7:30: "Temptations of the Moon," "Primitive Mysteries," "Persephone," and "Acts of Light." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989.)

Joffrey Ballet—Opening performances of a four-week engagement that will run through Sunday, Nov. 22—Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 7:30: "The Dream," "La Vivandière Pas de Six," and "Light Rain." . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 8: "Parade," "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune,"

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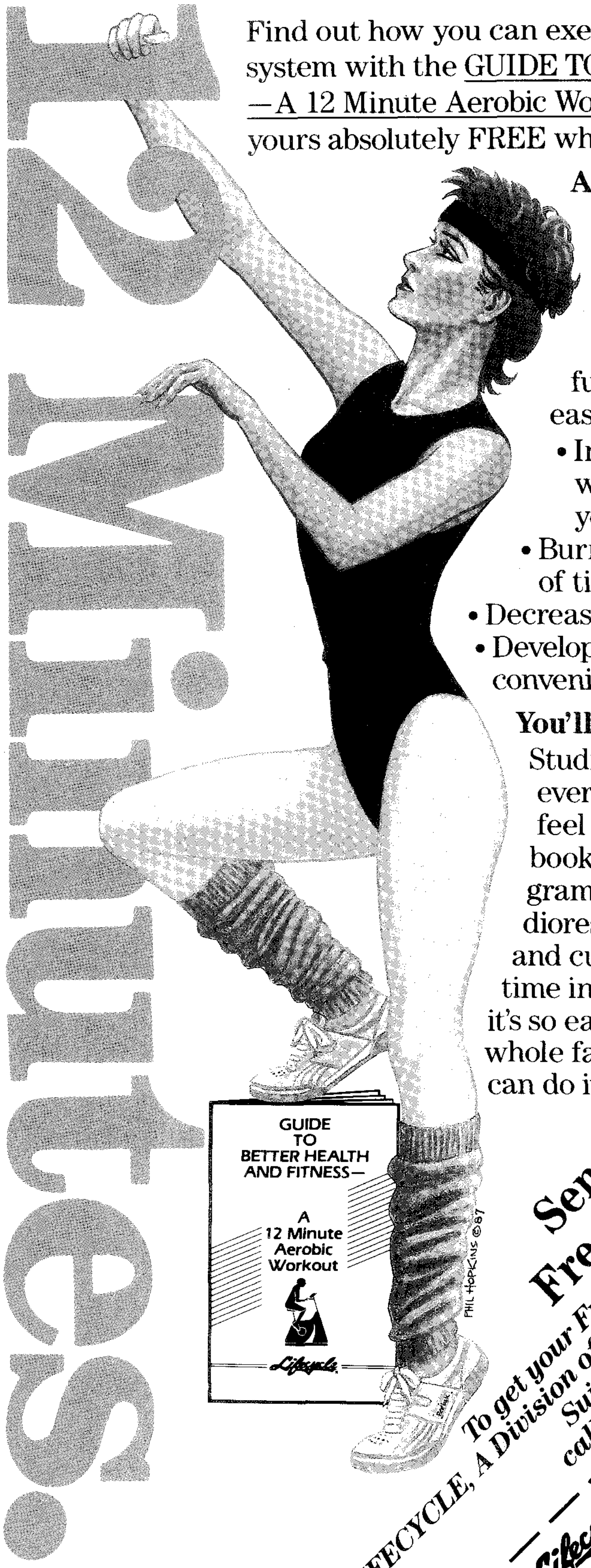
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

and "Le Sacre du Printemps." . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8: "The Dream," "Monotones," and "Les Patineurs." . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 30, at 8: "Arden Court," "Three Preludes," "La Vivandière Pas de Six," and "Force Field." . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8, and Sunday, Nov. 1, at 2 and 7:30: "La Fille Mal Gardée." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989.)

Feld Ballet—Final performances of the engagement—Wednesday evening, Oct. 21: "Straw Hearts," "Return to Maria La Baja," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Oct. 22: "Harbinger," "Medium:Rare," "Theatre," and "Intermezzo No. 2." . . . ¶ Friday evening, Oct. 23: "Aurora II," "Adieu," "A Dance for Two," and "The Consort." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Oct. 24: "Straw Hearts," "Return to Maria La Baja," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Oct. 24: "Meadowlark," "Over the Pavement," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, Oct. 25: "Aurora II," "Adieu," "A Dance for Two," and "The Consort." . . . ¶ Sunday evening, Oct. 25: "Harbinger," "Medium:Rare," "Intermezzo No. 2," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, Oct. 27: "Straw Hearts," "Return to Maria La Baja," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Oct. 28: "Aurora II," "Adieu," "A Dance for Two," and "The Consort." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Oct. 29: "Meadowlark," "Over the Pavement," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Friday evening, Oct. 30: "Straw Hearts," "Return to Maria La Baja," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Oct. 31: "Harbinger," "Medium: Rare," "Theatre," and "Intermezzo No. 2." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Oct. 31: "The Consort," "Embraced Waltzes," and "Skara Brae." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 2.)

Liz Lerman—Two programs of contemporary dance—Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 22-24, at 8, and Sunday, Oct. 25, at 3: Program A. . . . ¶ Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24, at 11 P.M.: Program B. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

Dennis Wayne's Dancers—Three programs of contemporary dance—Wednesday, Oct. 21, and Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8: Program A. . . . ¶ Thursday and Friday, Oct. 22-23, at 8: Program B. . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 25, at 4:30: Program C. (Triplex Theatre, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)

Ekathrina Sobechanskaya and Her Original Trockadero Gloxinia Ballet Company—Opening performances of a return engagement that will run through Sunday, Nov. 8. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 28-31, at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Montgomery, Plant & Stritch, a zippy, polished vocal trio, sing and patter in the Oak Room Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Angry Squire, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautically appointed bar and restaurant. Any swaying you may notice yourself doing is probably generated by the musicians, who perform amidships on a railed-in platform. **MAURA ELLYN** sings here on Friday, Oct. 23; **BARRY HARRIS,** whose piano flies under the flag of Parker and Powell, leads a trio on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30-31. Sets begin Sundays through Thursdays at nine-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at ten.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A neat-as-a-pin cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. **BLOSSOM DEARIE** has a little voice—just about two octaves, and at the top of her range it turns to mist—but she makes a virtue of it. She sings at six-thirty Wednesdays through Saturdays. Late risers can hear **LONETTE MC KEE** sing at nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

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Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this club, there is a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. Trumpeter **FREDDIE HUBBARD** and four collaborators blow up a hard-bop gale through Sunday, Oct. 25; Tom Grant, a West Coast keyboardist and fusionist, brings in a quartet on Monday, Oct. 26; and on Tuesday, Oct. 27, **MAX ROACH** arrives with his all-percussion octet, **M'BOOM.** Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Music for many kinds of people, including unreconstructed folkies, rock-and-roll fundamentalists, Village bopcats, and members of the **TONY MACHINE** fan club. Tony Machine is the drummer in **BUSTER POINDEXTER'S** jivey R. & B. band, the **BANSHEES OF BLUE.** A long while ago, he was a roadie for the New York Dolls, a band in which Buster Poindexter was known as David Johansen. Buster Poindexter likes to say that Tony Machine got his drum kit in a sale that took place when the British rock band Spooky Tooth broke up. But Tony Machine keeps good time on it, and Buster Poindexter sometimes gives him solo space, permitting him to wander around the room and tap out rhythms on bottles and tabletops and patrons. Tony Machine and company will be here Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24. The rest of the schedule: Thursday, Oct. 22, Montreux; Monday, Oct. 26, the **GADD GANG;** Tuesday, Oct. 27, the Bobs and the **WASHINGTON SQUARES;** and Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30-31, Garland Jeffreys. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists and bassists compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. **RED MITCHELL** is the key figure, the bassist upon whom star pianists regularly lean. (A first-rate accompanist, Mr. Mitchell, who's here throughout October, is also a moving soloist; the other night, he followed an Oscar Peterson-style disquisition by the Canadian pianist Oliver Jones on "Georgia on My Mind" with a brief, clarifying solo that brought the song back down to earth.) He works with **ROGER KELLAWAY** through Saturday, Oct. 24, and with **HANK JONES** starting Monday, Oct. 26. On Sundays, Mr. Mitchell leads a trio. First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Everything about this club is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view from the bar of the bandstand, and the view out the window of Vaux & Withers' gabled Victorian courthouse. **MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS,** a founder of the avant-gardist Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and a versatile pianist, guides his quintet through Sunday, Oct. 25. Mondays are in the swell hands of seven-string guitarists **BUCKY** and **JOHN PIZZARELLI.** Music from nine every night except Monday, when it begins at eight. Dining.

ROYALE
ROYALE
tom funk

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BOBBY SHORT,** a prince among café singers, is presiding over the little principality known as the Café Carlyle. Bassist **BEVERLY PEER** and drummer **ROBBIE SCOTT** are his assistants. Sets at ten and midnight Tuesdays through Saturdays. Mr. Short will be absent on Saturday, Oct. 24; Marti Stevens will pinch-hit for him. . . . ¶ Over in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** sings and plays the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding that you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte.* **ROSEANNA VITRO** sings here on Wednesday, Oct. 21; Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 22-25, tenor saxophonist **JIMMY HEATH'S** quartet trades sets with a foursome led by trumpeter Mike Metheny (the older brother of guitar hero Pat Metheny); and on Tuesday, Oct. 27, **BUCK CLAYTON** moves in with his thirteen-piece band, which features trombonist **JIMMY KNEPPER.** On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—Once a truck warehouse, this SoHo establishment now provides space for palm trees to mature in and for non-trucking types to eat and drink and listen to good pianists. The schedule: through Saturday, Oct. 24, **HAL SCHAEFER;** Tuesday through Thursday, Oct. 27-29, **MICHAEL WEISS;** Friday, Oct. 30, Peter Malinverni; and Saturday, Oct. 31, **MICKEY TUCKER** (with bassist **RUFUS REID**). Sets begin at seven Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at seven-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Mondays and Thursday, Oct. 22.

Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—A small, pleasant, quirkily constructed corner bar from which the human pageant (upper-middle East Side wing) is visible. **BOB DOROUGH,** the Arkansas-born singer and pianist whose admirers and collaborators include Dave Frishberg (with whom he wrote "I'm Hip"), Blossom Dearie (with whom he has recorded duets, including a contemporary call-and-response number entitled "Answering Machine"), and Miles Davis (for whom he wrote a Christmas blues), is here with bassist **BILL TAKAS** Wednesdays through Saturdays. Sundays and Mondays belong to singer Stan Edwards' trio; and Tuesdays are claimed by guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE,** pianist **WARREN CHIASSON,** and bassist **MICHAEL FLEMING.** Music from ten.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the dining room, a modern Steinway. **JUNIOR MANCE,** ten nimble fingers and no thumbs, performs on it, with bassist **MARTY RIVERA** at his side, through Saturday, Oct. 24, and on Tuesday, Oct. 27, **JOHN BUNCH** and **JAY LEONHART** swing into action. New Orleans whiz kid **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** is on duty Sundays and Mondays. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Probably the only place in town that features avant-garde jazz, advanced rock, Breathe Easy medicinal tea, homemade yogurt, and smoothies. Wednesday, Oct. 21, Hans Reichel and Tom Cora; Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24, harmolodic funk guitarist **JAMES (BLOOD) ULMER;** Sunday, Oct. 25, the Khan Jamal trio and **BERN NIX** (a guitarist in Ornette Coleman's Prime Time band); Monday, Oct. 26, saxophonist Charles Gayle; and Wednesday, Oct. 28, alto saxophonist **TIM BERNE'S** quartet. Music after nine.

Lone Star Café, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Texas-like in significant respects, though not in the open-spaces-and-clear-sight-lines department, in which it is New York-like. The lineup: Wednesday, Oct. 21, the Wild Blue Marlins, featuring country-rock singer and fiddler Soozie Tyrell; Friday, Oct. 23, Pure Prairie League and the SURREAL MC COYS; Saturday, Oct. 24, the SUN RHYTHM SECTION, veteran rock-and-rollers from Memphis; Sunday, Oct. 25, TRACY NELSON and Ian Tyson; and Monday, Oct. 26, Texas-bred bluesman JOHNNY COPELAND and Johnny Reno & the Sax Maniacs. Music after nine. Dining.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub, Englished up with pictures of lions and monarchs and with mirrors that double as advertisements for vintage whiskeys. MARY WILSON, who sang and shimmied with the Supremes from beginning to end and recently wrote a book all about it, sings here at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. On Mondays after nine-thirty, Woody Allen usually sits in on clarinet with a New Orleans-style sextet. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—Small but satisfying helpings (trio-size, as a rule) of jazz, Latin jazz, and R. & B. in a spiffy upper West Side café. Thursday, Oct. 22, belongs to Robben Ford, a guitarist who has played in Miles Davis's electric funk outfit. Pianist HILTON RUIZ will be here Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24. Music from around ten. Dining.

Ritz, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Up-to-the-minute rock in a half-century-old ballroom. Pre-cotillion activities include watching videos, milling around, and showing the bartender the plastic wristband you have to wear if you want to drink. JONATHAN RICHMAN, who wrote a great song about Vincent van Gogh and an eloquent one about going to the beach and an O.K. one about Walter Johnson, sings with his band, the MODERN LOVERS, on Saturday, Oct. 24; SUZANNE VEGA sings her urban folktales in that clear, cool, standoffish way of hers on Tuesday, Oct. 27; and the FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS, a first-rate Texas blues band, perform on Thursday, Oct. 29. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Hip-swivelling music from Brazil and elsewhere. Jugs and drums are suspended from the rafters, and a dioramic slice of jungle life is affixed to the wall above the bandstand. Wednesday, Oct. 21, WILLIE COLÓN'S salsa orchestra; Thursday, Oct. 22, Kimati Dinizulu's African drumming ensemble; Friday, Oct. 23, TABOU COMBO; Saturday, Oct. 24, MARIO RIVERA & THE SALSA REFUGEES; Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 28-29, TOOTS & THE MAYTALS; and Friday, Oct. 30, MIKATA. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Speakeasy, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—Outside, on the boulevards of Greenwich Village, heedless local youths and tourists from New Jersey make mad music; inside, dulcimers are hammered, fiddles are fiddled, folk songs are sung, and Professor Irwin Corey sometimes pops his head in to explain what a light bulb is (a thing that sucks up darkness until it goes out). Tom Chapin performs here on Friday, Oct. 23; banjo picker TONY TRISCHKA brings in his string band, SKYLINE, on Saturday, Oct. 24; and ROD MAC DONALD sings on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30-31. Sundays are in the hands of the Wretched Refuse String Band, a bluegrass outfit. Music from about eight-thirty. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. Flugelhornist ART FARMER and tenor saxophonist BENNY GOLSON co-pilot their dandy six-seat JAZZTET through Sunday, Oct. 25. On Tuesday, Oct. 27, SUN RA enters in his flowing robes and sequinned space traveller's hat to take his Intergalactic Halloween Arkestra through some swing numbers as well as some atonal cosmic material. Shows from about ten. Dining.

Tramps, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—A low-ceilinged, plain-but-functional blues and rock outpost. The decorative flourishes include pictures of Big Joe Turner, a Mets pennant, roadhouse neon, and a fiddle-footed black cat, who roams the premises looking for a seat better than the one it just abandoned. Wednesday, Oct. 21, wild-woman chanteuse PHOEBE LÉGÈRE and the Dots; Thursday, Oct. 22, the World Famous Bluejays and the A-Bones; Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24, blues saxophonist A. C. REED and his band, the SPARK PLUGS;

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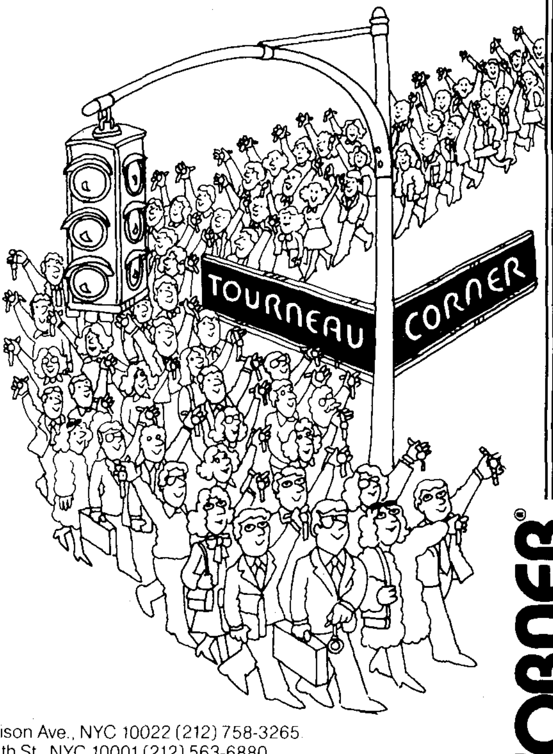

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Sunday, Oct. 25, Nine Below Zero and Johnny Avalanche; Monday, Oct. 26, the Wilmingtons; Tuesday, Oct. 27, the Riffkings; Friday, Oct. 30, the **PERSUASIONS**, an a-cappella harmony group founded in Brooklyn twenty-five years ago; and Saturday, Oct. 31, the Delancey Street Hawaiians, with rock-and-soul singer **LIL QUEENIE**. Music after nine-thirty.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—Salsa bands perform in the refectorylike downstairs room on Mondays after nine-thirty. On Oct. 26, Pancho Sanchez's orchestra will share the stage with **TITO PUENTE'S** midsize Latin-jazz ensemble and tenor saxophonist **STANLEY TURRENTINE**, the guest soloist. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the Terrace Bar, **PATTI BOWN** roams the keyboard in her own adventurous, eccentric, and pleasurable way from six to nine-thirty Fridays through Sundays. Pianist **WALTER NORRIS** and bassist **LISLE ATKINSON** perform through Sunday, Oct. 25; **HILTON RUIZ** and a bassist go to work on Tuesday, Oct. 27. Both these duos begin at about ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of the few places below the surface of New York that deserves landmark status. It's also one of the few places anywhere that has a notable (if that's the right word) light fixture—one that Charles Mingus K.O.'d while trying to reason with the proprietor, and that the proprietor, a preservationist as well as a businessman, decided to leave in Mingus-ized condition. Pianist **CEDAR WALTON** directs his quintet through Sunday, Oct. 25, and on Tuesday, Oct. 27, West Coast saxophonist and flutist **BUD SHANK** descends the stairs with his quartet. The **MEL LEWIS ORCHESTRA** works out on Mondays. Music after ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Those who can resist the temptations of the large barroom here—pinball, video games, a dialogue with a budding logical positivist from Columbia U.—will find another, smaller room, where jazz musicians hold sway. Bassist **MICKEY BASS'S** group will be on hand through Sunday, Oct. 25; on Thursday, Oct. 29, a trio led by former Basie band trumpeter **JOE NEWMAN** takes charge. Music from about nine. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Pasta and jazz. The latter emanates from a passageway between a back room reserved for trenchermen and a front-room bar. Pianist **KENNY BARRON** teams up with bassist **RUFUS REID** through Saturday, Oct. 24, and with **PAUL WEST** starting Monday, Oct. 26. Sundays are set aside for guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE**. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ / FOLK / ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

JERRY GARCIA—Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. 575-9200. Wednesdays, Sundays, and Saturday, Oct. 31, at 2 and 8; and Fridays and Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8. Through Saturday, Oct. 31.

SMOKEY ROBINSON—With Regina Belle. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 21-22, at 8.)

KEITH JARRETT—With Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Friday, Oct. 23, at 8.)

HOWIE MANDEL—With Lou Dinos. (Radio City Music Hall. Friday, Oct. 23, at 8 and 11:30.)

BERLIN–NEW YORK JAZZ EXCHANGE—With Sirone, Anthony Brown, Jason Hwang, Nick Steinhaus, Thomas Borgmann, and Jacques Nobili. (Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St. 864-4500. Friday, Oct. 23, at 8. . . . ¶ Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. 219-3055. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 4.)

MICHAEL FRANKS—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8.

ROYAL NEW YORK DOO-WOP SHOW—Radio City Music Hall. Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8.

PÉ-DE-BOI—With Olu Dara. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8 and 10. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concerts.)

MICHAEL TARAWHITI MCGIFFORD—With Kelly Wyatt, in the first of three concerts. (13th Street Repertory Theatre, 50 W. 13th St. 675-6677. Monday, Oct. 26, at 7.)

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SUZANNE VEGA—With Judy Tenuta. (Radio City Music Hall. Monday, Oct. 26, at 8.)

LISA LISA AND CULT JAM—With Exposé. (Radio City Music Hall. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 28-29, at 8.)

REBA MCENTIRE—With the Desert Rose Band. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 8.)

THE CARS—Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8.

TONY BENNETT—Radio City Music Hall. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8.

LOREN SCHOENBERG QUARTET—Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8. No tickets necessary.

BILLY TAYLOR—With his trio, in the first of three concert/lectures. This one features the music of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Fletcher Henderson, and Fats Waller. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR.—With Stanley Turrentine. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8 and 11:30.)

LIBERTAD LAMARQUE—Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8:30, and Sunday, Nov. 1, at 2:30.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

ROBERT BARIBEAU / HARRIS DIAMANT—Recent abstract paintings. / Small machinelike steel sculptures. Through Thursday, Oct. 29. (Stone, 48 E. 86th St.)

FRITZ BULTMAN (1919-85)—A two-gallery exhibit of works by this painter and influential teacher. (Schlesinger-Boisanté, 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St. Through Nov. 4. . . . ¶ Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. Through Friday, Oct. 23. Opens at 1.)

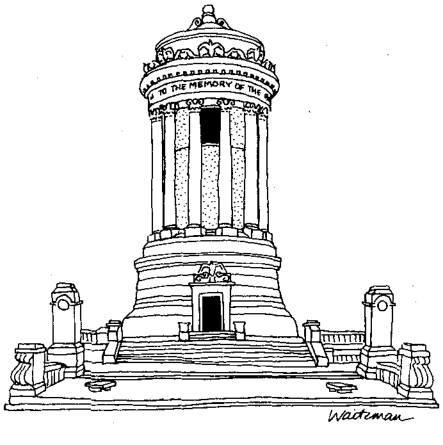
STEPHEN DE STAEBLER—Fragmented figures in bronze and ceramic. Through Nov. 14. (CDS Gallery, 13 E. 75th St. Open Mondays.)

JOHN FERREN (1905-70)—Vertical wood panels that have been painted with phosphorescent colors and grouped so as to reflect off one another. Also, drawings and watercolors. Through Friday, Oct. 30. (Perlow, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

GEORGES JEANCLOS—Figurative terra-cotta sculptures primarily based on Biblical themes. Through Nov. 14. (Bernard, 33 E. 74th St.)

JOAN MIRÓ (1893-1933)—Sculptures, paintings, and drawings. Through Nov. 14. (Weintraub, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

ROBERT OHNIGIAN—A challenging new series of collages centering on headdresses of earlier times. Through Nov. 3. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 417 E. 75th St.)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ROLAND PETERSEN—Figurative paintings from the sixties by a Bay Area artist. Through Nov. 28. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

MOSES AND RAPHAEL SOYER—Paintings and drawings from the W.P.A. period. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Radann, 790 Madison Ave., at 67th St. Opens at noon.)

DAVID STOREY—Abstract paintings, a few on shaped canvases, a few on multiple panels, plus drawings. Through Nov. 3. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

JOHN WALKER—Semi-abstract paintings; several have a shield-and-axe motif. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At **HIRSCHL & ADLER**, 21 E. 70th St.: In a show of American prints dating from 1736 to 1966 particular attention is paid to colored woodcuts as exemplified in the work of Blanche Lazzell and William Zorach. Through Nov. 7. . . . **WILDENSTEIN**, 19 E. 64th St.: Paintings and works on paper by Spanish masters from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The works are on loan from the Meadows Museum, in Dallas. Admission is two dollars. Through Friday, Oct. 30. (Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

BEN BERNS—Plein-air paintings of North Carolina landscapes. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

JOHN BOWMAN—Didactic paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

LARRY BROWN—Abstractions painted on several wood panels arranged in slight relief. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St.)

WILLIAM CONLON / LAWRENCE POONS—Geometric abstractions on canvas. Through Nov. 7. / Heavily impastoed paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

ENRICO DONATI—Abstract mixed-medium paintings from the past four decades. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Gimpel, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

LLYN FOULKES—Paintings of rock formations collaged with photographs of rocks are among these works from the sixties. Through Nov. 14. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

PHILIP GUSTON (1913-80)—Paintings from 1971. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (McKee, 41 E. 57th St.)

JOHN HOYLAND—Abstract paintings and monotypes by a British artist. Through Nov. 28. (Lever-Meyerson, 16 W. 57th St.)

BEN KAMIHIRA—Paintings of figures in interiors. Through Nov. 7. (Gallery Urban, 500 Park Ave., at 59th St.)

ALEX KATZ—Paintings from the early sixties. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

JACQUES LIPCHITZ (1891-1973)—Sculptures, wall reliefs, and drawings from his Cubist period. Through Nov. 14. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

RICHARD MAYHEW—Recent landscape paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Midtown, 11 E. 57th St.)

ELIE NADELMAN (1882-1946)—Sculptures in assorted mediums, including bronze, wood, and papier-mâché, plus drawings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

BRIAN NISSEN—Abstract relief paintings and small bronze sculptures. Through Nov. 7. (Prats, 24 W. 57th St.)

ELIZABETH OSBORNE / MARJORIE PORTNOW—Geometric patterns appear in the backgrounds of several of these still-life paintings and drawings. / Small landscapes of the Hudson River Valley and Santa Barbara. Through Nov. 4. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

GIULIO PAOLINI—Recent sculptures by a member of the Arte Povera movement. Through Sat-

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The airlift, organized by our Cessna Aircraft Company, flew more than 900 Special Olympians and their coaches from 12 states to South Bend, Indiana, to compete in the Seventh International Summer Games. The Special Olympians competed there for a full week. Then the airlift fleet of Citations returned to pick them up and fly them home.

A Cessna Citation jet takes off on a business mission every minute of every day. That's testimony to the quality of our jets.

But 130 companies decided to set aside business missions in favor of one that is more important. Special Olympics.

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GENERAL DYNAMICS

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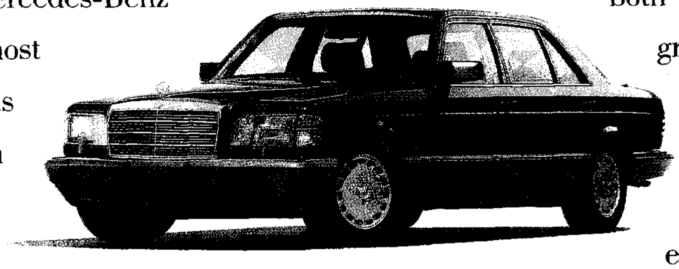
THE MERCEDES-BENZ S-CLASS: THE ONE THING MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TECHNOLOGY INSIDE IT IS THE TRADITION BEHIND IT.

A "big Mercedes" has crowned the line for almost as long as there has been a Mercedes-Benz.



This is Mercedes-Benz engineering at its most ambitious. And at its most assertive. From the 540K of 1936 pictured at left, to the S-Class sedan of 1987 shown above, every big Mercedes and its performance has seemed to scale slightly larger than life.

The 540K, for example, thundered into legend on the power of a supercharged eight-cylinder engine and the flamboyance of low-slung roadster coachwork. Half a century of technological progress later, the S-Class seems to glide rather than thunder over the road; in the case of the flagship 560SEL Sedan on the roads of its native Europe, two tons of S-Class authority, capable of gliding along at 142 mph all day.

The Mercedes-Benz impulse to engineering masterstrokes marks the S-Class in other ways as well. In a body design that brilliantly combines large dimensions and low aerodynamic drag. In handling agility that large sedans have seldom aspired to, much less achieved. In vital technological innovations—an Anti-lock Braking System (ABS); and a Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) with driver's-side air bag and knee bolster, and emergency tensioning retractors at both front seat belts—that are gradually being emulated by other large sedans.

And laid over this bedrock of technical excellence, a thick layer of civilization and creature comfort. Experienced within a spacious cabin redolent of fine leathers, plush with velour carpeting, garnished with precious handworked woods.

Part limousine, part performance car—the uncommon versatility of the S-Class is reflected in its selection not only by connoisseurs of automotive luxury, but also by most of today's top-ranked Grand Prix motor racing fraternity.

The S-Class is available in three distinctive sedan models and as a two-plus-two closed coupe. You will find nothing to compare with them, in form or in function, wherever you look in the automotive world. They are unique, as is the tradition that spawned them.

Engineered like no other car in the world

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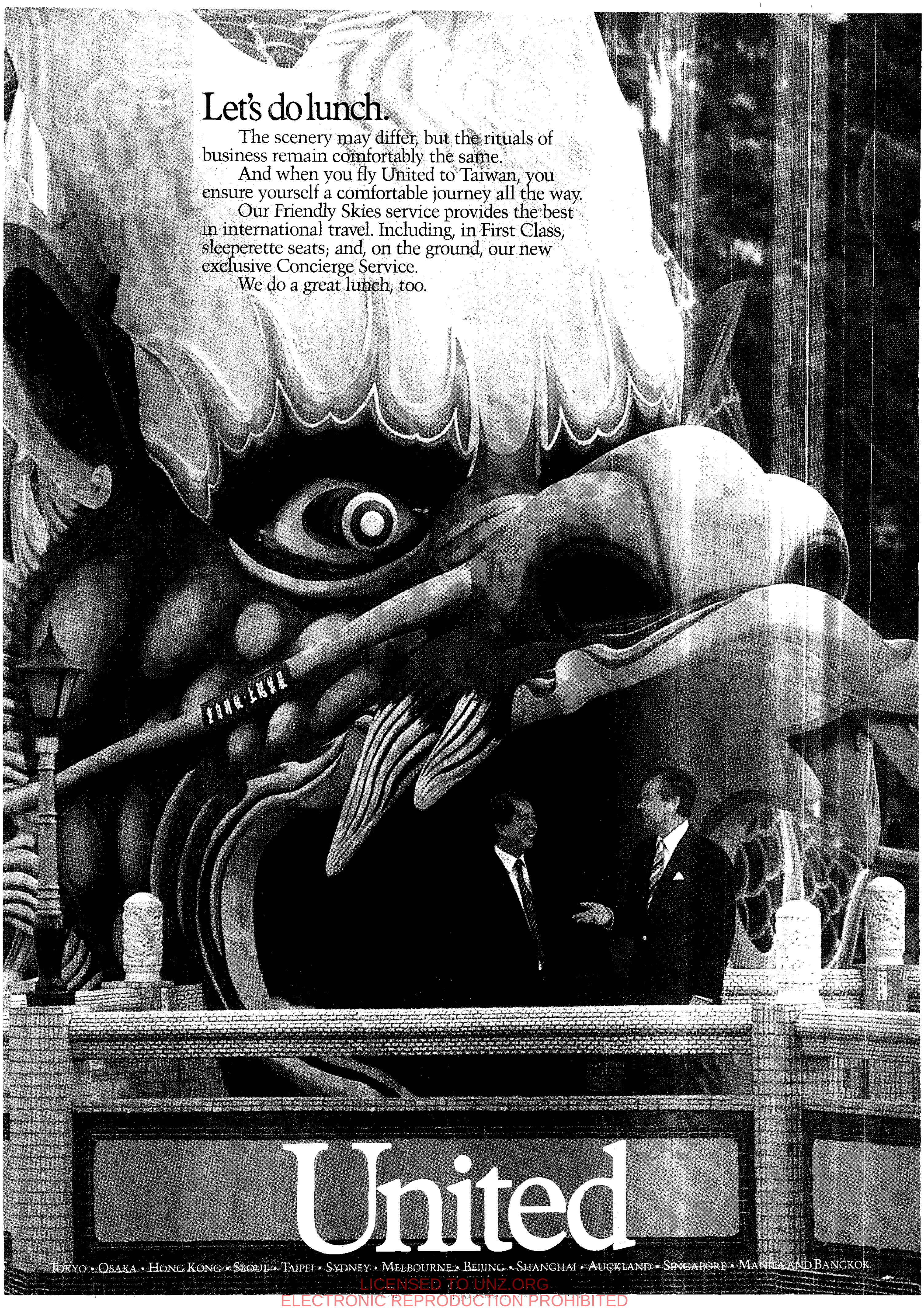

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urday, Oct. 31. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Picasso (1881-1973)—Cubist paintings, drawings, sketchbooks, and prints. Through Dec. 19. (Krugier, 41 E. 57th St.)

Rebecca Purdum—Large abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Paul Rickert—Recent paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (French, 41 W. 57th St.)

David Saunders / Max Ernst (1891-1976)—Oil paintings, most of which have a single object (an apple, a rice bowl, a hand) seemingly afloat on the canvas. / Prints. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Richard Serra—Large steel plates and beams balancing against one another or leaning against the gallery walls; also, drawings. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Isabelle H. Siegel—Abstract bronze sculptures with a variety of patinas. Through Nov. 11. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

David True / Win Knowlton—Rich-colored paintings on paper of obscured figures and animals. / Abstract objects cast in concrete, iron, or copper. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Idelle Weber—Superrealist paintings of nature, some of which incorporate Formica frames around, on top of, or below the canvases. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Nancy Wissemann-Widrig—Tranquil landscapes. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Jack Youngerman—Abstract paintings and pastels. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

Sculpture—Works, primarily from the forties, by artists who at the time embraced surrealism. Louise Bourgeois, Jean Arp, and Isamu Noguchi are among those represented. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

Ida Applebroog—New paintings. Through Nov. 14. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Miquel Barceló—Sand, pieces of fabric, and cigarette butts are among the materials the artist uses to add texture to these abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Derek Boshier—Paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Totah, 152 Wooster St.)

Richard Bosman—Large seascapes, each made up of two or three canvas panels. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Paul Brach—Pointillist paintings and crosshatch drawings of Southwest landscapes. Through Nov. 7. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

Helmut Federle—A two-gallery exhibit of abstract geometric paintings. Through Nov. 14. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St. . . . ¶ Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Jacques Flèchemuller—Wall hangings made of army tenting that is painted with concrete-looking but wholly imaginary forms. Through Nov. 7. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Sonia Gechtoff—Abstract works on paper from 1975 to the present. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Gruenebaum, 415 West Broadway.)

David Geiser—Heavily textured abstract paintings that use encaustic, tar, and resin. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Littlejohn-Smith, 133 Greene St.)

Robert Gober—Wood sculptures that are take-offs of playpens, cribs, and other equipment. Through Wednesday, Oct. 28. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

April Gornik—Paintings and drawings of dramatic sweeping landscapes imagined by the artist. Through Nov. 14. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Michael Hafftka—New paintings of distorted figures. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (DiLaurenti, 383 West Broadway.)

Peter Halley—New paintings by an artist whose work appeared in this year's Whitney Biennial. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Cham Hendon—Colorful kaleidoscopic paintings. Through Nov. 7. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Christopher Hewat—The intense stylization of memorial sculpture is underscored in an installation consisting of a small, very crowded cemetery of painted wood obelisks, pyramids, and railings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Munroe, 415 West Broadway.)

Susan Laufer—New abstract mixed-medium paintings. Through Nov. 14. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

Michael Loew (1907-85) / **Ellen Wiener**—Geometric paintings completed in the last ten years of his life. / Abstractions in mixed mediums on paper. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Pearl, in a new location, at 420 West Broadway.)

Karl Mann—Assemblages. Through Nov. 14. (Green, 152 Wooster St.)

Joan Nelson—Landscape paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Fawbush, 568 Broadway.)

Kingsley Parker—Fighter planes, tankers, and bank façades appear in these new paintings and in several large sculpture installations. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Condeso-Lawler, 76 Greene St.)

Beatrice Riese / Joel Tarlowe—Pattern paintings. / Pastel landscapes. Through Nov. 8. (Pleiades, 164 Mercer St. Open Sundays.)

Susan Rothenberg—New paintings. Through Nov. 14. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Lucy Sallick—Self-portraits, each composed of up to fifteen images on separate sheets of paper. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Einstein, 591 Broadway.)

Greta Schreyer / Tibor Gergely (1900-78)—Dense pen-and-ink drawings of a stream in Woodstock, Connecticut. / Landscapes, still-lifes, and portraits painted by this Hungarian artist before he emigrated here, in 1939. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Ingber, 415 West Broadway.)

Alan Siegel—The artist has stretched the definition of a chair even further with these new pieces in painted wood. Through Nov. 11. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Robert Smithson (1938-73)—Five sculptures, plus related drawings. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

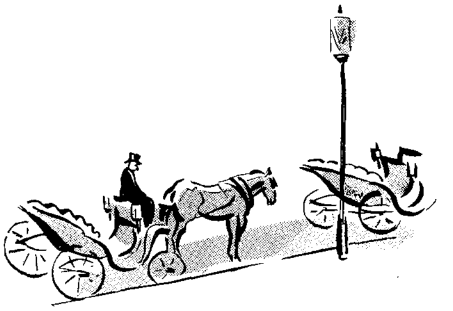
Mark Tansey—New monochromatic allegorical paintings. Through Nov. 14. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Michael Venezia—Small wood ladders and artists' palettes, painted with gold, silver, and bronze leaf, and hung like canvases. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Roeder, 545 Broadway.)

Kay WalkingStick—Diptychs juxtaposing landscapes and abstractions. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

Andy Warhol (1930-87)—Paintings, drawings, and collages based on the human skull. Through June 18. (Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Saturdays.)

Chihung Yang—Large paintings with figures, plants, and motifs from African and pre-Columbian sculpture. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Walls, 137 Greene St. Opens at 1 on Sundays.)



OTHER GALLERIES

Rosemarie Castoro—Welded-steel sculptures and wall reliefs of opera characters the artist sketched during live performances. The sketches are also on view. Through Sunday, Oct 25. (Bromm, 170 Avenue A, at 11th St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Willem de Kooning—Paintings done between 1955 and 1963. Through Dec. 5. (Gagosian, 521 W. 23rd St., near Eleventh Ave.)

Richard Pettibone—Paintings from the sixties and seventies, plus more recent sculptures. Through Sunday, Oct. 25. (Nature Morte, 204 E. 10th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Maura Sheehan—A two-part installation based on the artist's ideas about the Mayan civilization. (Art Galaxy, 262 Mott St., just south of Houston St. Through Nov. 14. . . . ¶ Facchetti, 476 Broadway. Through Nov. 4.)

Michael Tracy—A twenty-year survey of paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. Through Dec. 20. (P.S. 1, at 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Group Show—Works by Blinky Palermo, Imi Knoebel, and Joseph Beuys inaugurate the Dia Art Foundation's newest exhibition space, at 548 W. 22nd St. Through June 19. (Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Berenice Abbott and Eugène Atget (1857-1927)—Photographs of Paris. Through Nov. 4. (Armstrong, 50 W. 57th St.)

Eve Arnold—Photographs of Marilyn Monroe taken between 1952 and 1962. Through Nov. 12. (Castelli Graphics, 4 E. 77th St.)

Daniel Babior—Black-and-white photomontages of urban figures in rural landscapes. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Urdang, 23 E. 74th St.)

Harry Callahan—Photographs. Through Nov. 28. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

Henri Cartier-Bresson—The Museum of Modern Art has mounted a show of his early prints. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Ralph Gibson / Elliot Schwartz—Prints from the past thirty years. Through Sunday, Oct. 25. / Photographs of sculpture and machine fragments, death masks, and shrunken heads. Through Nov. 15. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.) . . . ¶ Black-and-white photographs taken in Paris by Mr. Gibson are on view at the French Institute/Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Through Nov. 13.

Charles Harbutt—A retrospective of works by a photojournalist. Through Nov. 28. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

Florence Henri (1893-1983)—Photographs from the twenties printed on canvas. Through Saturday, Oct. 24. (Prakapas, 19 E. 71st St. Opens at noon.)

Helen Levitt—A retrospective. Through Nov. 7. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Paul Strand (1890-1976)—Prints of Maine and its inhabitants. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at noon.)

Todd Watts—Prints of a simulated galaxy. Through Nov. 1. (P.P.O.W, 337 E. 8th St., near Avenue C. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Edward Weston (1889-1958)—Approximately a hundred and twenty prints are at the Metropolitan Museum. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Clarence H. White (1871-1925)—Photographs and photogravures. Through Nov. 28. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

Neil Winokur—This portraitist surrounds each of his subjects with four photographs of things they value. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A show of more than two hundred ob-

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jects from the court of Sultan Süleyman I, who, during his forty-six-year reign over the Ottoman Empire, ruled as vigorously over his imperial studios (wooden Koran boxes, painted tiles, embroidered costumes, illuminated manuscripts) as he did over his spectacularly outfitted soldiers (jewel-encrusted helmets and swords, embroidered leather boots). . . . ¶ Eighty or so paintings by members of the Hudson River School, among them Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, and John F. Kensett. . . . ¶ A retrospective of approximately seventy works by the seventeenth-century Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán, including "The Virgin of Las Cuevas" and "St. Hugo of Grenoble Visiting the Refectory." Through Dec. 13. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** A Weston retrospective that also includes letters, memorabilia, and portraits of the artist. Through Saturday, Oct. 31. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A full complement of Frank Stella's painted metal wall reliefs, plus a few of the works that led up to them. . . . ¶ The career of the sound-and-video artist Bill Viola is surveyed in a show that includes three installation pieces. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Prints from the early thirties by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Through Nov. 29. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A retrospective of works by Jan Dibbets, a Dutch contemporary known for his abstract compositions combining photographs and drawing. Through Nov. 1. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A Charles Demuth (1883-1935) retrospective of paintings: Precisionist architectural scenes, studies of flowers and fruit, and portraits of vaudeville and theatrical figures. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—A retrospective of paintings by the black social realist Jacob Lawrence, whose early work included narrative paintings about such figures as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and John Brown. Through Nov. 30. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A show of ancient ivory carvings made by Bering Sea Eskimos, ranging from snow goggles and harpoon fittings to ceremonial figurines. . . . ¶ Paintings and models of dinosaurs as they have been envisioned by artists and paleontologists in the past hundred years or so. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—The tradition of the Chinese artist-scholar is illustrated in a show (on loan from the Shanghai Museum) focussing on two Ming-dynasty artists. Paintings, calligraphy, and such paraphernalia as ceramics, jades, inkstones, and wrist rests, some seen in a furnished studio typical of the vocation. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Drawings, prints, and photographs of arches—that is, historic monumental arches, as in Piranesi's etching of four Roman arches or Stanford White's working drawing for the Washington Square Arch, and contemporary fanciful arches designed for the 1986 Galveston Mardi Gras by seven architects. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—In a display of bequests and loans, a predella panel of the Crucifixion by the quattrocento painter Piero della Francesca has been reunited with three other paintings, all originally part of an altarpiece in Borgo San Sepolcro, the artist's home town. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB, 47 E. 60th St.—"Marianne Moore: Vision Into Verse," a show from the personal literary archive of the writer which groups thirty-three of her poems with objects that inspired them—a toy crow alongside "To Victor Hugo of My Crow Pluto," for instance. Notebooks, working manuscripts, letters, books, and other materials on loan from the Rosenbach Museum and Library, of Philadelphia. Through Nov. 28. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—The Dreyfus Affair is the subject of an exhibit of about six hundred items, including paintings, sculptures, posters, books, letters, and films. (Open daily except Fridays and Saturdays. Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—A show of drawings by Raphael, among them a study for an apostle in the great altarpiece "Transfiguration," and drawings by some of his studio assistants. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway—A retrospective of drawings by the conceptual sculptor Bruce Nauman. Through Nov. 8. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays, noon to 10; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Off the Berg Collection's bookshelves has come a show of a hundred works containing often-quoted first lines, including "In the beginning was the Word," from an American-Indian translation of the New Testament published in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1661; and "April is the cruellest month," from the original typescript of T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." (Open daily, except Sundays and Thursdays, 10 to 6.)

ART AFTER DARK

(Performance, music, dance, video, film, and combinations thereof.)

FRANKLIN FURNACE, 112 Franklin St. 925-4671—MaryMary (performance duo), Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24, at 8:30.

THE KITCHEN, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793—Man Act (performance duo), Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 21-24, at 8:30.

P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288—Alien Comic (performance), Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 22-25, at 9.

NOTE—"Blue Scene Grey," a new work written and directed by Linda Mussmann, with a cast of thirteen, five of whom are musicians. At Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St., Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:30, and an afternoon show on Sunday, Oct. 25, at 3. For information about tickets, call 924-0077. . . . ¶ A marathon twenty-five-hour performance benefit for the Food and Hunger Hotline. Over a hundred performers, musicians, writers, and dancers will participate. At the KIVA Foundation for Art, 309 Canal St., between Broadway and Mercer St. Starts Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performances. . . . ¶ A trio of musicians who call themselves Songs from a Random House and who play ukeleles. At Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077, Monday and Tuesday, Oct. 26-27, at 8.

MUSIC

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 8: "Tosca," with Eva Marton, Giuseppe Giacomini, Sherrill Milnes, and Italo Tajo; conducted by Christian Badea. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 22, at 8: "Das Rheingold," with Ellen Shade, Gail Gilmore, Siegfried Jerusalem, and James Morris; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 23, at 8: "Manon," with Carol Vaness, Alfredo Kraus, Gino Quilico, and David Hamilton; Manuel Rosenthal. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 24, at 12:30: "Die Walküre," with Hildegard Behrens, Gail Gilmore, Gary Lakes, and Hans Sotin; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8: "L'Elisir d'Amore," with Sona Ghazarian, Dawn Upshaw, Dano Raffanti, and Gregg Baker; Ralf Weikert. . . . ¶ Monday, Oct. 26, at 8: "Das Rheingold," with Ellen Shade, Gail Gilmore, Seigfried Jerusalem, and Hans Sotin; James Levine. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8: "Tosca" (a nonsubscription performance), with Eva Marton, Giuseppe Giacomini, Sherrill Milnes, and Italo Tajo; Christian Badea. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 7: "Die Walküre," with Hildegard Behrens, Gail Gilmore, Gary Lakes, and Hans Sotin; James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8: "Manon," with Carol Vaness, Alfredo Kraus, Erich Parce, and James Courtney; Manuel Rosenthal. . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 30, at 8: "La Bohème," with Roberta Alexander, Barbara Daniels, Bruno Beccaria, and Brian Schexnayder; Julius Rudel. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 31, at 1: "Tosca," with Eva Marton, Giuseppe Giacomini, Sherrill Milnes, and Italo Tajo; Christian Badea. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 31, at 7: "Die Walküre," with Hildegard Behrens, Waltraud Meier, Timothy Jenkins, and Hans Sotin; James Levine.

New York City Opera—Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 8: "Faust," with Elizabeth Knighton, Susanne Marsee, Richard Leech, and John Cheek; conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 22, at 8: "Die Zauberflöte," with Valerie Girard, Virginia Sublett, Randall Outland, and Jan Opalach; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 23, at 8: "Turandot," with Gail Tremitiere, Edith Davis, Vyacheslav M. Polozov, and Herbert Perry; Elio Boncompagni. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 24, at 2: "The Rake's Progress," with Elizabeth Hynes, Joyce Castle, Jon Garrison, and Stanley Wexler; Jorge Mester. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 24, at 8: "Tosca," with Linda Roark-Strummer, Robert Grayson, and Roger Roloff; Alessandro Siciliani. . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 25, at 1: "Madame Butterfly," with Catherine Lamy, Susanne Marsee, John Absalom, Rodger Hugh Wangerin, and James Billings; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 25, at 7: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with Kathryn Bouleyn, Stefano Algieri, and Stanley Wexler; and "Pagliacci," with Margaret Cusack, Jon Fredric West, Pablo Elvira, and William Parcher. Sergiu Comissiona conducting both. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8: "Die Zauberflöte," with Valerie Girard, Virginia Sublett, Randall Outland, and Jan Opalach; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 8: "The Rake's Progress," with Elizabeth Hynes, Joyce Castle, Jon Garrison, and Stanley Wexler; Jorge Mester. . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 30, at 8: "Tosca," with Linda Roark-Strummer, Robert Grayson, and Roger Roloff; Alessandro Siciliani. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 31, at 2: "Die Fledermaus" (in English), with Elizabeth Holleque, Constance Hauman, Mark Beudert, and Robert Orth; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8: "Turandot," with Gail Tremitiere, Edith Davis, Vyacheslav M. Polozov, and Herbert Perry; Elio Boncompagni. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Sunday, Nov. 15.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "La Traviata." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Fridays and Saturdays, Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 30-31, at 7:30.)

Richard Tucker Memorial Concert—Participants in a benefit concert will be Joan Sutherland, Eva Marton, Alfredo Kraus, Sherrill Milnes, and others, and members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, conducted by Richard Bonynge and Anton Guadagno. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Erich Leinsdorf conducting. Thursday, Oct. 22, at 8; Friday, Oct. 23, at 2; and Saturday, Oct. 24, and Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8: A Sibelius-Grieg-Borodin program, with Jorge Bolet, piano. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8; Friday, Oct. 30, at 2; Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8; and Tuesday, Nov. 3, at 7:30: A Mozart-Stravinsky program.

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducting the

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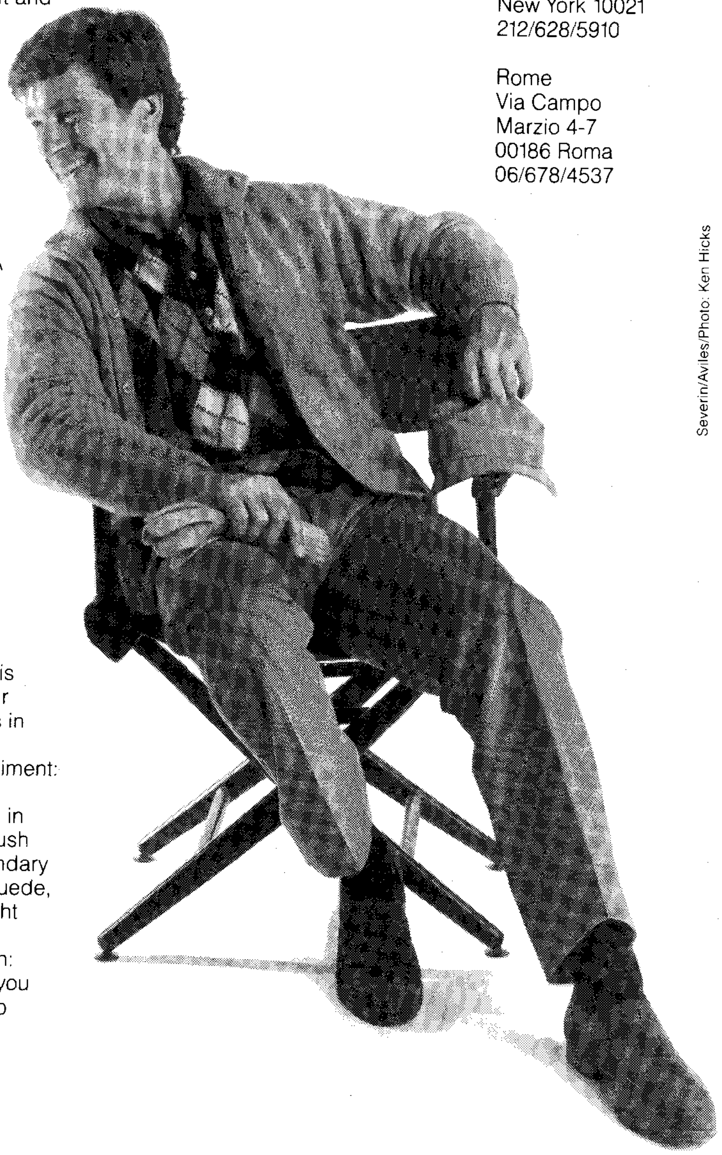

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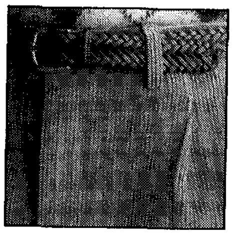

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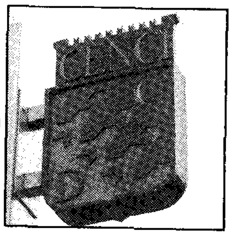


GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Beethoven "Emperor" concerto, with Murray Perahia, piano, and the New York première of Hans Werner Henze's Symphony No. 7. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 21-22, at 8.)

Pittsburgh Symphony—Lorin Maazel conducting, with James Galway, flute. (Avery Fisher Hall. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 3.)

Liège Philharmonic—Pierre Bartholomée conducting a Franck-Mozart program, with Jeffrey Siegel, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Monday, Oct. 26, at 8.)

Leningrad State Symphony of the U.S.S.R.—In its first New York appearance in ten years. Alexander Dmitriev conducting a Weber-Tchaikovsky-Shostakovich program, with Lazar Berman, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

Toronto Symphony—Andrew Davis conducting works by, among others, Mendelssohn and Saint-Saëns, with Itzhak Perlman, violin. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducting the fortieth-anniversary concert. With Pilar Lorengar, soprano, and Leonard Raver, organ. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 8.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Christoph Eschenbach conducting works by Mozart and Haydn. With Margaret Price, soprano. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducting, with Carter Brey, cello. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8.)

Prism—Robert Black conducting a program of music by Schoenberg, Susan Blaustein, and Ravel, with Barbara Ann Martin, mezzo-soprano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8.)

Zurich Chamber Orchestra—Edmond de Stoutz conducting. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 8.)

Manhattan String Orchestra—Wolfgang Engles conducting Bach's "The Art of the Fugue." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8. *No tickets necessary.*)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducting a program of spine-chilling music. The Amazing Kreskin will be on hand to read minds. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

Master Players Chamber Orchestra of New York—Stephen Pomerantz conducting an all-Mozart program. (Merkin Concert Hall. Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

Boston Camerata—Joel Cohen directing a concert version, with original instruments, of Monteverdi's "L'Orfeo." With D'Anna Fortunato, mezzo-soprano; Jon Humphrey, tenor; and Robert Honeysucker, baritone. (Merkin Concert Hall. Thursday, Oct. 22, at 8.)

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg directing the chorus and orchestra in the second two in a series of concerts. Saturday, Oct. 24, at 7:30: Bach's Mass in A, and other works. (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. For information about tickets, call 874-3104.) . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 30, at 7:30: Bach's "Magnificat," Handel's "Dixit Dominus," and other works. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

RECITALS

Chamber Music at the Y—With Stanley Drucker, clarinet; Edward Flower and Stanley Silverman, classical guitarists; Julius Levine, double bass; Daniel Phillips and Michael Tree, viola; and Peter Wiley and Sharon Robinson, cello. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 8.)

Asia Society Concerts—Yamaguchi Goro playing the shakuhachi, a Japanese bamboo flute, in a concert of traditional Japanese music. With assisting artists. (Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Thursday, Oct. 22, at 8.)

Mannes Trio—Chamber music. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Friday, Oct. 23, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Eliot Fisk and Paula Robison—Classical guitarist and flute. (Weill Recital Hall. Friday, Oct. 23, at 8.)

Leontyne Price—Soprano, with David Garvey, piano, performing a benefit concert for the United Negro College Fund. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 3.)

For the Love of Music—Chamber music. (Merkin Concert Hall. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 3.)

Musicians' Accord—Presenting a program that explores the influence of folk music on twentieth-century composers. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Frances Veri and Michael Jamanis—Duo piano, in an all-Gershwin concert. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 4.)

Music Before 1800—Louis Bagger, clavichord and harpsichord, playing compositions by three members of the Bach family. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 4; at 3, Laurence Libin will give a lecture on eighteenth-century keyboard instruments. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—The opening performances of the Society's regular season feature the New York première of Shulamit Ran's "Concerto da Camara II." (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 5, and Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 7.)

Anthony Newman—Organ and harpsichord. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, Oct. 26, at 7:30.)

Juilliard String Quartet—A Schubert-Hindemith-Smetana program. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8. *For information about tickets, call 874-7515.*)

Arminda Canteros—Piano. (City University Graduate Center Auditorium, 33 W. 42nd St. Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Bowery Ensemble—In a program that honors John Cage's seventy-fifth birthday. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

Pilar Lorengar—Soprano, with Jeffrey Goldberg, piano. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 8.)

James Levine and Ken Noda—Duo piano and piano four hands, in an all-Mozart program. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum. Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

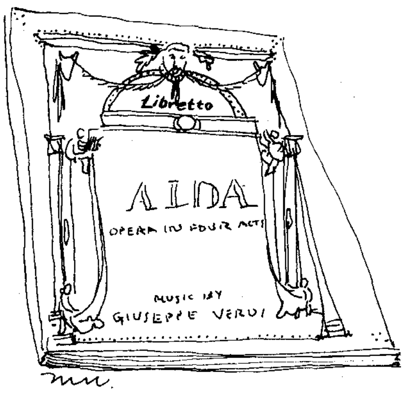
Samuel Bartos—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

American String Quartet—With Robert McDonald, piano, in a Beethoven-Schumann program. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Thursday, Oct. 29, at 8. *No tickets necessary.*)

William Wolfram—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

Colorado Quartet—With Menahem Pressler, piano. (Weill Recital Hall. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

Timothy Eddy and Gilbert Kalish—Cello and piano. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Friday, Oct. 30, at 8. No tickets necessary.)



Ensemble Barattelli—Sylvano Barattelli conducting a program of classical and contemporary Italian music. (Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 360-3503. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30-31, at 8.)

Ida and Ani Kavafian—Violin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

Lynn Harrell—Cello, playing works by Bach and Hindemith and the world première of Donald Erb's "Aura II: Fantasy for Cellist." (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum. Saturday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Madison Square Garden is 563-8300, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, and for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222.)

Basketball—Exhibition games—At Madison Square Garden: Phoenix Suns vs. Detroit Pistons and Knicks vs. Houston Rockets, Tuesday, Oct. 27, starting at 6. . . . ¶ Nets vs. Washington Bullets and Knicks vs. Indiana Pacers, Saturday, Oct. 31, starting at 6.

Football—Giants vs. St. Louis Cardinals. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Sunday, Oct. 25, at 4.)

Hockey—At **madison square garden:** Rangers vs. Calgary Flames, Wednesday, Oct. 21. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Chicago Black Hawks, Friday, Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Monday, Oct. 26. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Los Angeles Kings, Wednesday, Oct. 28. (Games begin at 7:35.) . . . **byrne meadowlands arena:** Devils vs. Islanders, Friday, Oct. 23, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Edmonton Oilers, Saturday, Oct. 31, at 7:45. . . . **nassau coliseum:** Islanders vs. Devils, Saturday, Oct. 24, at 7:05. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Chicago Black Hawks, Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 7:05. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Rangers, Saturday, Oct. 31, at 7:05.

Racing—At **aqueduct:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. The Man o' War, Saturday, Oct. 24. . . . **meadowlands:** Weeknights at 7:30; through Saturday, Dec. 19. The Meadowlands Cup, Friday, Oct. 23, and the Young America Stakes, Friday, Oct. 30.

Trotting—At Yonkers Raceway: Nightly at 8; through Thursday, Dec. 31.

ET ALIA

Poetry Readings—*Jane Shore and Charles Simic* reading from their own works. (Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. Monday, Oct. 26, at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Discussions—Jules Feiffer, George Booth, Nicole Hollander, and Mark Alan Stamaty taking part in a program called "Cartooning as Autobiography." (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. 787-6557. Friday, Oct. 23, at 8.)

Fall Antiques Show—The annual show of Americana, offered by more than a hundred dealers. (Passenger Ship Terminal, Pier 92, Twelfth Ave. at 52nd St. Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 22-24, from noon to 10, and Sunday, Oct. 25, from 11 to 6. Free shuttle buses will run from 62 W. 50th St. to the show and back.)

National Postage Stamp Show—The thirty-ninth annual display will feature special showings by sixty-one governments. First-day issues from the United Nations will go on sale Friday, Oct. 23. (Madison Square Garden Exposition Rotunda, Seventh Ave. at 32nd St. Thursday, Oct. 22, from noon to 7; Friday, Oct. 23, from 11 to 7; Saturday, Oct. 24, from 10 to 6; and Sunday, Oct. 25, from 11 to 5.)

Flower Show—Thousands of varieties of Japanese chrysanthemums will go on display in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at the New York Botanical Garden starting Saturday, Oct. 24. (Bronx Park. Daily, except Mondays, 10 to 4; through Nov. 15.)

Daylight-Saving Time—Ends on Sunday, Oct. 25, at 2 A.M. Turn the clock back an hour.

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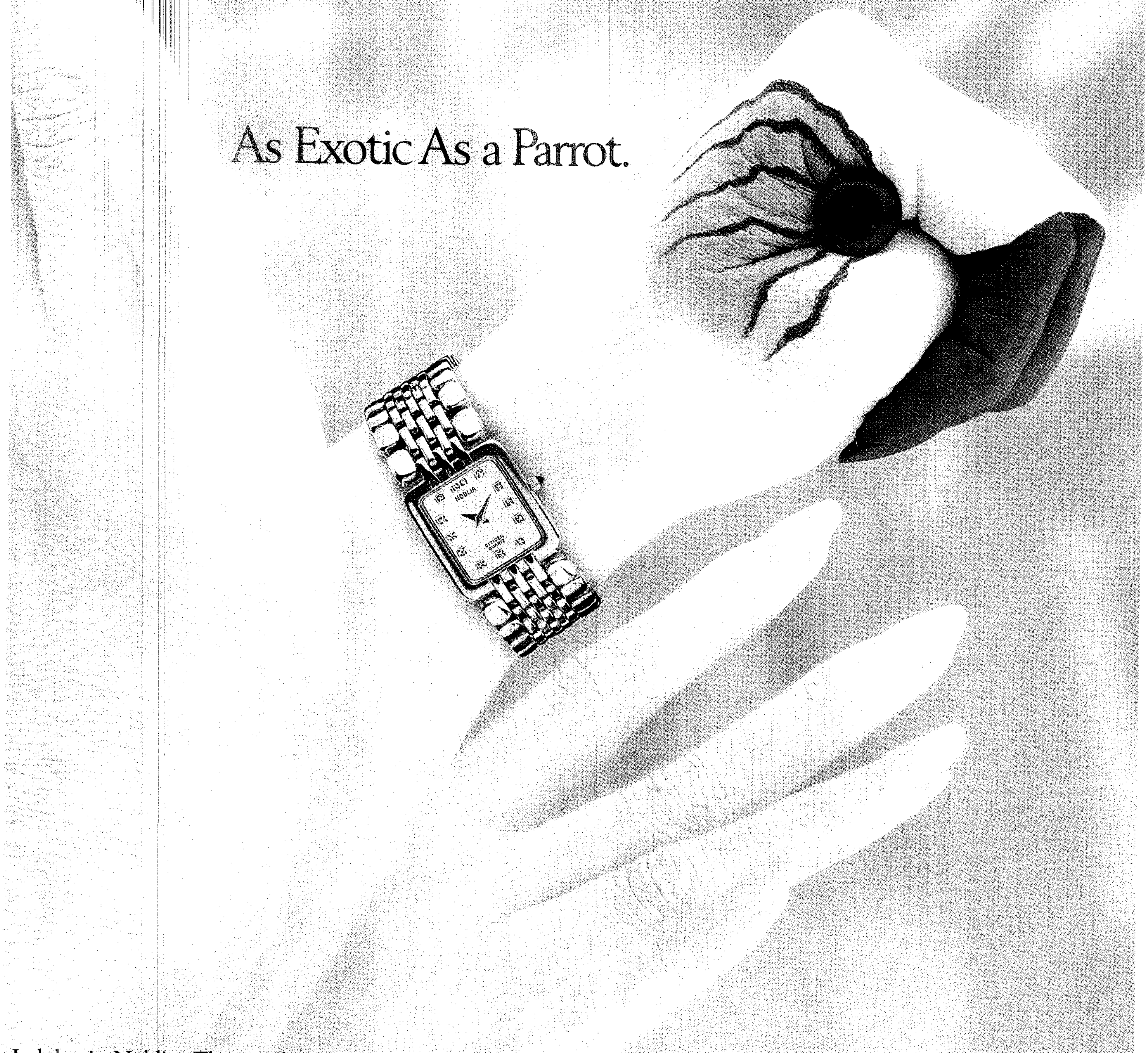

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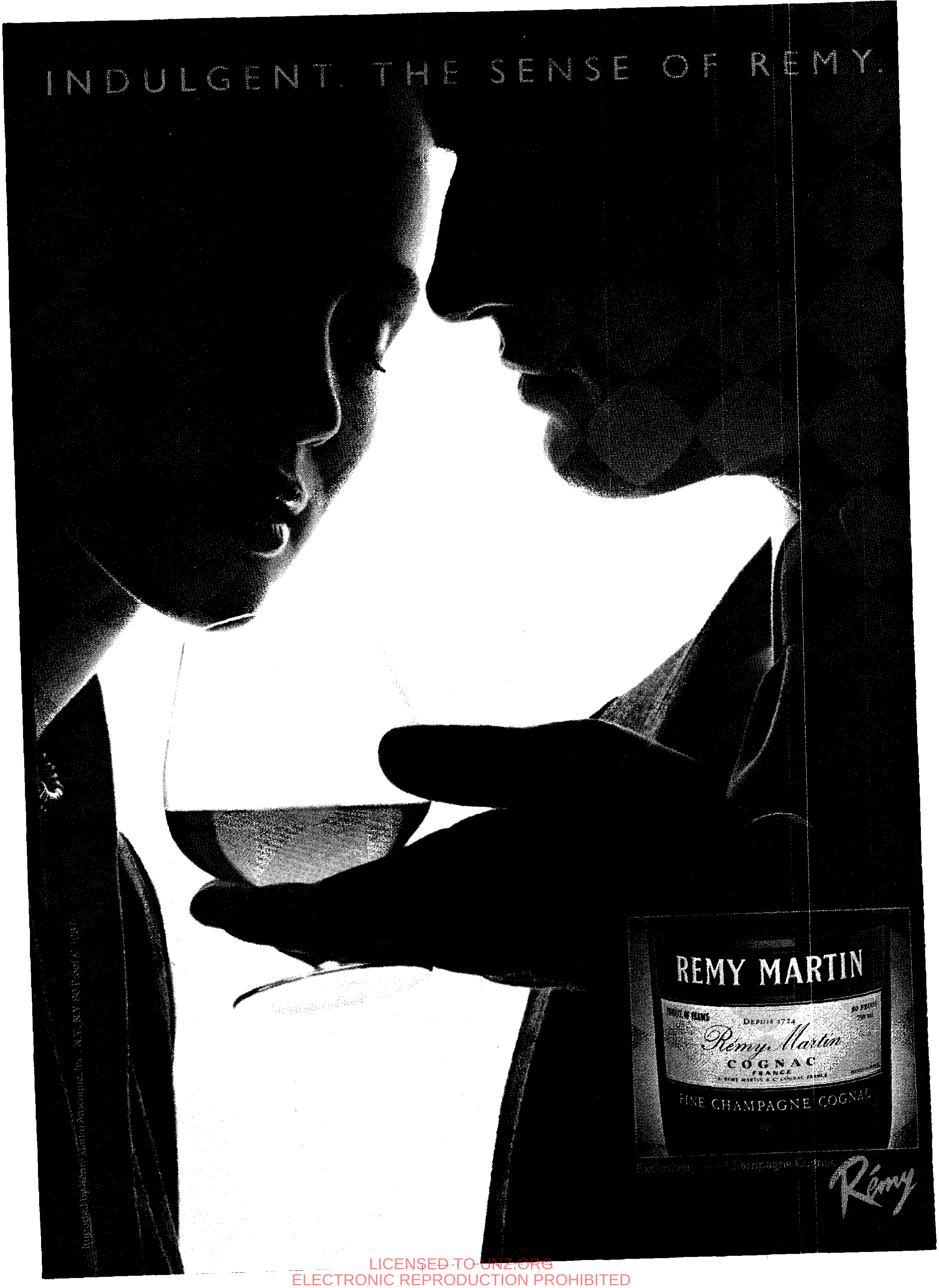
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 21.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Oct. 21: (Separate admissions) "Having a Wild Weekend" (1965; directed by John Boorman), with the Dave Clark Five; and "Written on the Wind" (1957; Douglas Sirk), with Rock Hudson, Lauren Bacall, Robert Stack, and Dorothy Malone.
Oct. 22-23: (Separate admissions) "Excalibur" (1981; John Boorman), with Nicol Williamson and Nigel Terry; and "Written on the Wind."
Oct. 24-25: (Separate admissions) "Point Blank" (1967; John Boorman), with Lee Marvin, Angie Dickinson, Carroll O'Connor, and Keenan Wynn; and "Written on the Wind."
Oct. 27-28: (Separate admissions) "Deliverance" (1972; John Boorman), with Jon Voight, Burt Reynolds, Ned Beatty, and Ronny Cox; and "Written on the Wind."
Oct. 29-30: (Separate admissions) "Zardoz" (1974; John Boorman), with Sean Connery and Charlotte Rampling; and "Written on the Wind."
From Oct. 31: (Separate admissions) "The Emerald Forest" (1985; John Boorman), with Powers Boothe, Meg Foster, and Charley Boorman; and "Written on the Wind."

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "Man on Fire" (Elie Chouraqui), with Scott Glenn. From Oct. 23: "Suspect" (Peter Yates), with Cher and Dennis Quaid.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Surrender" (Jerry Belson), with Sally Field, Michael Caine, Steve Guttenberg, and Peter Boyle. From Oct. 23: "Dirty Dancing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Weeds" (John Hancock), with Nick Nolte.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Princess Bride" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Oct. 22: "Surrender" (Jerry Belson), with Sally Field, Michael Caine, Steve Guttenberg, and Peter Boyle.
From Oct. 23: "The Sicilian" (Michael Cimino), with Christopher Lambert.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Baby Boom" (†).
Theatre 2: "Fatal Attraction"(†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 22: "Best Seller" (†). From Oct. 23: "No Man's Land" (Peter Werner), with Charlie Sheen and D. B. Sweeney.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Someone to Watch Over Me" (Ridley Scott), with Tom Berenger, Mimi Rogers, and Lorraine Bracco.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Dirty Dancing" (†).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Through Oct. 22: "Surrender" (Jerry Belson), with Sally Field, Michael Caine, Steve Guttenberg, and Peter Boyle.
From Oct. 23: "Positive I.D." (Andy Anderson).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through Oct. 22: "The Pick-up Artist" (†).
From Oct. 23: "The Sicilian" (Michael Cimino), with Christopher Lambert.

Plaza, 42nd E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Dancers" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Someone to Watch Over Me" (Ridley Scott), with Tom Berenger, Mimi Rogers, and Lorraine Bracco.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Orphans" (Alan J. Pakula), with Albert Finney, Matthew Modine, and Kevin Anderson. From Oct. 23: "Prince of Darkness" (John Carpenter), with Donald Pleasence and Jameson Parker.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Hope and Glory" (†).
Theatre 2: "Barfly" (Barbet Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway.

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"House of Games" (David Mamet), with Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "Dark Eyes" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Whales of August" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Weeds" (John Hancock), with Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Like Father Like Son" (Rod Daniel), with Dudley Moore and Kirk Cameron. From Oct. 23: "Suspect" (Peter Yates), with Cher and Dennis Quaid.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Princess Bride" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "No Way Out" (1987 †). From Oct. 23: "No Man's Land" (Peter Werner), with Charlie Sheen and D. B. Sweeney.
Theatre 2: "Baby Boom" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"I've Heard the Mermaids Singing" (Patricia Rozema).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Fatal Attraction" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Like Father Like Son" (Rod Daniel), with Dudley Moore and Kirk Cameron.

86th Street Twin, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 25: "Someone to Watch Over Me" (Ridley Scott), with Tom Berenger, Mimi Rogers, and Lorraine Bracco. From Oct. 26: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 25: "Hello Mary Lou: Prom Night II" (Bruce Pittman). From Oct. 26: Theatre closed.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "The Outing." From Oct. 23: "The Killing Time" (Rick King), with Beau Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Man on Fire" (Elie Chouraqui), with Scott Glenn. From Oct. 23: "Prince of Darkness" (John Carpenter), with Donald Pleasence and Jameson Parker.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "No Way Out" (1987 †).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Too Outrageous!" (Dick Benner), with Craig Russell and Hollis McLaren. From Oct. 23: "The Sicilian" (Michael Cimino), with Christopher Lambert.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: "Jewel's Darl" (1985; directed by Peter Wells); and "A Death in the Family" (Stewart Main and Peter Wells).
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: The 20th International Tournée of Animation.
Theatre 2: "Vera" (Sérgio Toledo; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Big Easy" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Too Outrageous!" (Dick Benner), with Craig Russell and Hollis McLaren. From Oct. 23: "House of Games" (David Mamet), with Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"Like Father Like Son" (Rod Daniel), with Dudley Moore and Kirk Cameron.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Dancers" (†).
Theatre 2: "No Way Out" (1987 †).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "My Life as a Dog" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "The Whistle Blower" (Simon Langton), with Michael Caine, Nigel Havers, and James Fox. From Oct. 23: "John and the Missus."
Theatre 3: "Matewan" (†).
Theatre 4: "Wish You Were Here" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "In the Mood" (Phil Alden Robinson), with Patrick Dempsey, Talia Balsam, and Beverly D'Angelo. From Oct. 23: "Prince of Darkness" (John Carpenter), with Donald Pleasence and Jameson Parker.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Dirty Dancing" (†). From Oct. 23: "Night Flyers."
Theatre 3: "Someone to Watch Over Me" (Ridley Scott), with Tom Berenger, Mimi Rogers, and Lorraine Bracco.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"The Princess Bride" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll" (Taylor Hackford), a documentary about Chuck Berry.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through Oct. 22: "Dogs in Space" (†).
From Oct. 23: To be announced.

New Carnegie, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
"The Princess Bride" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Through Oct. 22: "The Right Hand Man" (Di Drew), with Rupert Everett and Hugo Weaving.
From Oct. 23: "The Glass Menagerie" (Paul Newman), with Joanne Woodward, Karen Allen, and John Malkovich.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Long Live the Lady!" (Ermanno Olmi; in Italian).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Maurice" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"No Way Out" (1987 †).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Fatal Attraction" (†).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Jean de Florette" (†).
Theatre 2: "My Life as a Dog" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 22: "Wish You Were Here" (†). From Oct. 23: "The Funeral" (†).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 29: "Tampopo" (†). From Oct. 30: "The Theme" (Gleb Panfilov; in Russian).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 29: "The Mozart Brothers" (Suzanne Osten; in Swedish). From Oct. 30: "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (Stephen Frears).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Barfly" (Barbet Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway.

Embassy 72nd St. I and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: "The Princess Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "The Big Easy"

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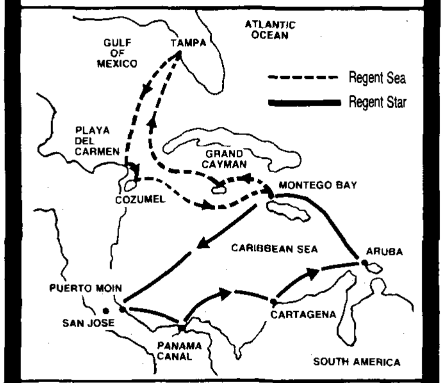

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(†). From Oct. 23: "No Man's Land" (Peter Werner), with Charlie Sheen and D. B. Sweeney.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Like Father Like Son" (Rod Daniel), with Dudley Moore and Kirk Cameron.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "No Way Out" (1987 †). From Oct. 23: "Suspect" (Peter Yates), with Cher and Dennis Quaid.
Theatre 3: "Baby Boom" (†).
Theatre 4: "Dancers" (†).
Theatre 5: "Weeds" (John Hancock), with Nick Nolte.
Theatre 6: "House of Games" (David Mamet), with Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Someone to Watch Over Me" (Ridley Scott), with Tom Berenger, Mimi Rogers, and Lorraine Bracco.
Theatre 2: "Matewan" (†).

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (866-7500)
Through Oct. 22: "Too Outrageous!" (Dick Benner), with Craig Russell and Hollis McLaren.
From Oct. 23: "The Sicilian" (Michael Cimino), with Christopher Lambert.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "The Principal" (directed by Christopher Cain), with James Belushi, Louis Gossett, Jr., and Rae Dawn Chong.
Theatre 2: "Big Shots" (Robert Mandel).
Theatre 3: "Surrender" (Jerry Belson), with Sally Field, Michael Caine, Steve Guttenberg, and Peter Boyle.
Theatre 4: "Like Father Like Son" (Rod Daniel), with Dudley Moore and Kirk Cameron.
Theatre 5: Through Oct. 22: "Like Father Like Son." From Oct. 23: "Suspect" (Peter Yates), with Cher and Dennis Quaid.
Theatre 6: "Near Dark" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
Through Oct. 22: "Baby Boom" (†).
From Oct. 23: "The Killing Time" (Rick King), with Beau Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Stakeout" (†). From Oct. 23: "No Man's Land" (Peter Werner), with Charlie Sheen and D. B. Sweeney.
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 29: "No Way Out" (1987 †). From Oct. 30: "The Hidden" (Jack Sholder), with Michael Nouri and Kyle MacLachlan.
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 22: "Man on Fire" (Elie Chouraqui), with Scott Glenn. Oct. 23-29: "Baby Boom" (†). From Oct. 30: "The Hidden."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Best Seller" (†).

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
Through Oct. 22: "Hello Mary Lou: Prom Night II" (Bruce Pittman).
From Oct. 23: "Prince of Darkness" (John Carpenter), with Donald Pleasence and Jameson Parker.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "China Girl" (Abel Ferrara), with James Russo. From Oct. 23: "The Sicilian" (Michael Cimino), with Christopher Lambert.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "Hellraiser" (Clive Barker). From Oct. 23: "Night Flyers."

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Someone to Watch Over Me" (Ridley Scott), with Tom Berenger, Mimi Rogers, and Lorraine Bracco.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Oct. 22: "Tracks" (1976; directed by Henry Jaglom), with Dennis Hopper, Taryn Power, Dean Stockwell, and Topo Swope; and "Easy Rider" (1969; Dennis Hopper), with Peter Fonda, Hopper, and Jack Nicholson.
Oct. 23-24: "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977; Luis Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina; and "The Milky Way" (1968; Luis Buñuel; in French).
Oct. 25: "The Conformist" (1970; Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda; and "Time of Indifference" (1965; Francesco Maselli), with Rod Steiger, Claudia Cardinale, and Shelley Winters.
Oct. 26-27: "Salvation!" (1987; Beth B); and "Wise Blood" (1979; John Huston), with Brad Dourif, Ned Beatty, Harry Dean Stanton, and Amy Wright.
Oct. 28-29: "Hidden Pleasures" (1985; Eloy de la Iglesia); and "Hell Without Limits" (1978; Arturo Ripstein).
Oct. 30-31: "The Pit and the Pendulum" (1961; Roger Corman), with Vincent Price, John Kerr, and Barbara Steele; "The Tomb of Ligeia" (1965; Roger Corman), with Vincent Price; and "The Raven" (1963; Roger Corman), with Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, and Jack Nicholson.

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Oct. 21: "Islands" (1986; Albert Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin, and David Maysles), and "Grey Gardens" (1976; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, Ellen Hovde, Muffie Meyer, and Susan Froemke), both documentaries.
Oct. 22-24: "Islands;" "Running Fence" (1978; David Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin, and Albert Maysles), a documentary; and "Christo's Valley Curtain" (1974; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, and Ellen Hovde), a documentary.
Oct. 25: "Islands;" "Vladimir Horowitz: The Last Romantic" (1985; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, Susan Froemke, Deborah Dickson, and Pat Jaffe), a documentary; and "Ozawa" (1985; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, Susan Froemke, and Deborah Dickson), a documentary.
Oct. 26-27: "Islands;" and "Salesman" (1969; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary.
Oct. 28-29: "Islands;" and "Gimme Shelter" (1970; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin), a documentary about the Rolling Stones.
From Oct. 30: "Red River" (1948; Howard Hawks), with Montgomery Clift, John Wayne, Walter Brennan, and Joanne Dru; and "My Darling Clementine" (1946; John Ford), with Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell, Victor Mature, and Walter Brennan.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Oct. 21: "The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean" (1972; John Huston), with Paul

Newman; and "A Walk with Love and Death" (1969; John Huston), with Anjelica Huston and Assaf Dayan.

Oct. 22: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972; Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "Diva" (1981; Jean-Jacques Beineix; in French), with Wilhelmenia Fernandez and Frédéric Andrei.

Oct. 23-24: "Mean Streets" (1973; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel; and "After Hours" (1985; Martin Scorsese), with Griffin Dunne and Rosanna Arquette.

Oct. 25: "The Magic Flute" (1975; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish); and "The Barber of Seville" (1949; in French).

Oct. 26: "The Official Story" (1985; Luis Puenzo; in Spanish), with Norma Aleandro; and "State of Siege" (1973; Costa-Gavras; in French), with Yves Montand.

Oct. 27: "Carmen" (1983; Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Antonio Gades; and "I Love You" (1982; Arnaldo Jabor; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Sonia Braga.

Oct. 28: "The Maltese Falcon" (1941; John Huston), with Mary Astor, Humphrey Bogart, Sydney Greenstreet, Elisha Cook, Jr., and Peter Lorre; "Across the Pacific" (1942; John Huston), with Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, and Sydney Greenstreet; and "Report from the Aleutians" (1943; John Huston), an Army Signal Corps documentary.

Oct. 29: "The Color Purple" (1985; Steven Spielberg), with Whoopi Goldberg; and "Native Son" (1986; Jerrold Freedman), with Oprah Winfrey, Elizabeth McGovern, and Victor Love.

Oct. 30-31: "Round Midnight" (1986; Bertrand Tavernier), with Dexter Gordon; and "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960; François Truffaut; in French), with Charles Aznavour.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 21: "Forsaking All Others" (1934; W. S. Van Dyke), with Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, Robert Montgomery, Rosalind Russell, and Billie Burke; and "Mannequin" (1938; Frank Borzage), with Joan Crawford, Spencer Tracy, and Alan Curtis.

Oct. 22: "Rififi" (1955; Jules Dassin; in French), with Jean Servais; and "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960; François Truffaut; in French), with Charles Aznavour.

Oct. 23-24: "The Man Who Never Was" (1956; Ronald Neame), with Clifton Webb, Gloria Grahame, and Robert Flemyng; and "The Spy Who Came In from the Cold" (1965; Martin Ritt), with Richard Burton, Claire Bloom, and Oskar Werner.

Oct. 25: "The Paradine Case" (1947; Alfred Hitchcock), with Alida Valli, Gregory Peck, Charles Laughton, and Ann Todd; and "North by Northwest" (1959; Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Leo G. Carroll, and Martin Landau.

Oct. 26: "The Magic Flute" (1975; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish); and "Smiles of a Summer Night" (1955; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ulla Jacobsson, Eva Dahlbeck, Gunnar Björnstrand, Jarl Kulle, and Harriet Andersson.

Oct. 27: "Ball of Fire" (1942; Howard Hawks), with Barbara Stanwyck and Gary Cooper; and "Lady of Burlesque" (1943; William Wellman), with Barbara Stanwyck, Michael O'Shea, J. Edward Bromberg, and Iris Adrian.

Oct. 28: "Down Argentine Way" (1940; Irving Cummings), with Betty Grable, Don Ameche, and Carmen Miranda; and "That Night in Rio" (1941; Irving Cummings), with Alice Faye, Don Ameche, and Carmen Miranda.

Oct. 29: "Detective Story" (1951; William Wyler), with Kirk Douglas, Eleanor Parker, and William Bendix; and "The Desperate Hours" (1955; William Wyler), with Humphrey Bogart, Fredric March, Martha Scott, Arthur Kennedy, Dewey Martin, and Gig Young.

Oct. 30-31: "Young and Innocent" ("The Girl Was Young;" 1937; Alfred Hitchcock), with Derrick de Marney, Nova Pilbeam, Basil Radford, Percy Marmont, and Mary Clare; and "Murder" (1930; Alfred Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 1: Theatre closed.

THEATRE 2: Oct. 22 at 3 and 6:30: "A Woman Is a Risky Bet: Six Orchestra Conductors" (1987; directed by Christina Olofson), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 2:30: "Stella Maris" (1918; Marshall Neilan; a silent film), with Mary Pickford and Conway Tearle. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 5:30: "The Squaw Man" 1914; Cecil B. De Mille and Oscar Apfel; a silent film), with Dustin Farnum, Winifred Kingston, and Red Wing. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 2:30: "True Heart Susie" (1919; D. W. Griffith; a silent film), with Lillian Gish and Robert Harron. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 5:30: "Humoresque" (1920; Frank Borzage; a silent film), with Vera Gordon and Alma Rubens. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 2:30: "The Testing Block" (1920; Lambert Hillyer; a silent film), with William S. Hart and Eva Novak. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 5:30: "Miss Lulu Bett" (1921; William De Mille; a silent film), with Lois Wilson, Milton Sills, and Theodore Roberts. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 3: "Male and Female" (1919; Cecil B. De Mille; a silent film), with Thomas Meighan, Gloria Swanson, and Bebe Daniels. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 6:30: "Damned If You Don't" (1987) and "Gently Down the Stream" (1981), both by Su Friedrich, who will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 3: "Queen Elizabeth" (1912; Louis Mercanton; a silent film), with Sarah Bernhardt and Lou Tellegen. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 3 and 6:30: "Weapons of the Spirit" (1986), directed by Pierre Sauvage, who will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 3: "Queen Elizabeth." . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 6:30: "True Heart Susie." . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 2:30: "Miss Lulu Bett." . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 5:30: "The Testing Block."

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Through Feb. 6: A retrospective of the television performances of Jackie Gleason. The schedule of performances is complicated; our best advice is to phone the museum for titles, schedules, and ticket information. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—A program of films which marks the twenty-five-year collaboration of James Ivory, Ismail Merchant, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Oct. 21 at 3 and 7: "Hullabaloo Over Georgie and Bonnie's Pictures" (1978), with Peggy Ashcroft, Aparna Sen, Victor Banerjee, and Saeed Jaffrey. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 3 and 7: "The Courtesans of Bombay" (1982), with Saeed Jaffrey. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 3 and 7: "Heat and Dust" (1982), with Julie Christie, Shashi Kapoor, and Greta Scacchi.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Oct. 23 at 6:30: "Laputa" (1986; Hayao Miyazaki; a Japanese film, dubbed in English). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6:30: "Zegen" (1986; Shohei Imamura; in Japanese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 6:30: "Echigo Okumiomote: A Traditional Mountain Village" (1984; Tadayoshi Himeda; in Japanese, partial narration in English and with English subtitles), a documentary. Mr. Himeda will be present.

Reel Pieces: Film as Collaborative Art—A series of films and lectures. Oct. 22 at 8:15: "Annie Hall" (1977; Woody Allen), with Allen and Diane Keaton. Ralph Rosenblum, the film's editor, will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 8:15: "My Dinner with André" (1981; Louis Malle), with André Gregory and Wallace Shawn. Mr. Malle will be present. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1920; John S. Robertson; a silent film), with John Barrymore. Original organ score written and played by Lee Erwin. (Oct. 26 at 7 and 9.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Arlene Croce and Terrence Rafferty.)

Baby Boom—Diane Keaton gives a glorious comedy performance that rides over many of the inanities in this picture by the monarchs of Yup: the writer-producer Nancy Meyers and the writer-director Charles Shyer. Their subject is the feminist as darling. Keaton is a Manhattan management-consulting firm's Tiger Lady until she's entrusted with the care of a baby girl. Then, her single-minded concentration gone and her status diminished, she quits, moves to a farmhouse in Vermont, meets a calm, steadying Gary Cooperish veterinarian helpfully named Cooper (Sam Shepard), and starts a venture that turns her into the biggest employer in town. Soon she's a tycoon, rejecting astronomic offers to sell out. She, her child, her lover, and her business are all booming, and the picture rattles along cheerily, cutting to the child for clever reactions, the way movies used to cut to the family dog. But Keaton is smashing: the Tiger Lady's having all this drive is played for farce and Keaton keeps you alert to every shade of pride and panic the character feels. She's an ultra-feminine executive, a wide-eyed charmer, with a breathless ditziness that may remind you of Jean Arthur in "The More the Merrier." With Sam Wanamaker as Fritz, Harold Ramis as the heroine's apartment mate, James Spader as her baby-faced assistant, Britt Leach as her Vermont plumber, and the twins Kristina and Michelle Kennedy as the baby. Also with Pat Hingle, Mary Gross, and, in quick flashes, Victoria Jackson, Dori Brenner, Robin Bartlett, Constance Forslund, Margaret Whitton, and many other wasted talents. Cinematography by William A. Fraker. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/19/87.) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through Oct. 22. . . . ¶ Embassy; Oct. 23-29.)

Best Seller—Larry Cohen's script, about a well-heeled contract killer (James Woods) who offers his life story to a widowed cop/novelist (Brian Dennehy), seems terribly pleased with its own ostentatious cleverness. The hit man wants revenge against his former employer, and the blocked writer needs a subject to get himself going again: we're meant to be impressed by the notion that their relationship is symbiotic. We're more likely to find the premise silly and contrived—and, as the standard action-movie chases and shootouts multiply, increasingly inorganic. John Flynn's hired-gun direction is blunt, functional, unimaginative: his literal-mindedness makes the movie's violence pointlessly ugly. (He and Larry Cohen truly don't need each other.) Woods, thin and neurotic, and Dennehy, beefy and stolid, work hard and skillfully at putting over their preposterous odd-couple relationship, but the mild wit they squeeze out of their routines doesn't seem worth the effort. With Paul Shenar and Victoria Tennant.—T.R. (Loews Astor Plaza. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace; through Oct. 22.)

The Big Easy—It has an amateurish, fifties-B-movie droopiness. Dennis Quaid plays a vain, irresistible New Orleans police lieutenant, half-Irish, half-Cajun, who is relaxed about accepting free meals and small favors; to him that's friendly, it has nothing to do with crime. Ellen Barkin plays a new assistant district attorney from up North who believes in the letter of the law—you can tell that from her drab tailored suits and her asexual prissiness. The lieutenant goes to work on her immediately in a few fairly explicit devilish-charmer-and-nervous-novice scenes, and her inhibitions melt away. The carnal humor of these moments gives the film a distinctive amiability, but there's too much TV-style drugs and killing, and the director, Jim McBride, has Quaid and Barkin playing too broadly; he also has the camera too close in—the performers stick out of the film frame. With Ned Beatty, John Goodman, Grace Zabriski, Lisa Jane Persky, and the great Charles Ludlam, who thrives on broadness. As a gentleman lawyer of Old Dixie, he rolls his eyes and wraps the picture like a ribbon around his panama hat.

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The script is by Daniel Petrie, Jr., and Jack Baran. (9/7/87) (Waverly. . . . ¶ Embassy 72nd St.; through Oct. 22.)

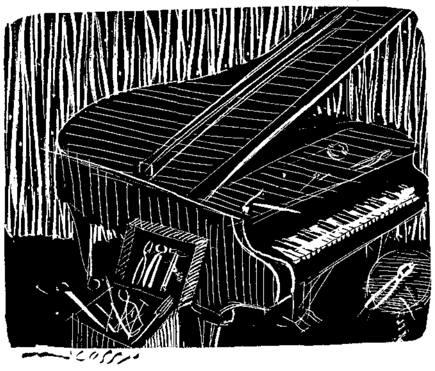
Dancers—One of those ballet films in which life mirrors art, and not the worst by a long shot. A company closely resembling American Ballet Theatre is in Italy filming "Giselle." Mikhail Baryshnikov is the glamorous, womanizing star, and Julie Kent is the artless young girl, new to the corps, who attracts him, falls in love with him, and becomes distraught when she learns that he is involved with the Italian countess (Mariangela Melato) who is visiting the set. The parallels are set up in Act I, which we see mostly in rehearsals that also serve to explain the action and style of the ballet. An extensive excerpt from Act II is then performed before the cameras (costumes and scenery are those of the current A.B.T. production), while the backstage tragedy plays itself out. The point of it all, of course, is Baryshnikov's performance of Albrecht, here captured on film for the first time, and it's enough to carry the movie's contrivances and occasional miscalculations. As Tony Sergeyev, Albrecht's real-life counterpart, Baryshnikov is required to play a man whose deadened spirit is awakened by youthful innocence, and he hardly ever gets a chance to show the marvellous wit and comic energy his theatre audiences know him to possess. (One shot of him doing a Chaplin walk down a hotel corridor has to suffice.) Another drawback is that he and the lovely-looking Miss Kent never dance together; the on-camera Giselle is Alessandra Ferri, and the Kent character is mainly a device to move the parallel plots, which at times get pretty thick with cross-references. Leslie Browne, the young dancer in love with Baryshnikov in "The Turning Point," appears here as one of his former flames, who as a consequence of their affair bears a grudge against men. She puts it to good use as Myrta, Queen of the Wilis. Tommy Rall, who years ago quit ballet for the movies, returns to this film to play Wilfrid, Albrecht's squire. Lynn Seymour appears as a self-styled "crazy lady" in the role of Giselle's mother, and Victor Barbee is Hilarion. The director is Herbert Ross, of "The Turning Point;" the script is by Sarah Kernochan, and it was prepared under the supervision of Ross's wife, the ballerina Nora Kaye, who also initiated the film, and was working on the production end when she died.—A.C. (Plaza, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Dark Eyes—Directed by Nikita Mikhalkov and shot in Italy and the Soviet Union, it amalgamates several short stories by Chekhov and is the kind of movie that is referred to as a "broad tapestry," or, as *Variety* put it, "a joyful sleighride through the turn of the century." It features obviousness and mugging—each in almost unprecedented amounts. Everything in it is overacted, is too slow and too close. And everything—the peasant merrymaking, the bands of gypsies who sing, the servants who are humiliated, the decadent rich who go to spas and take mud baths—provides us with a moral lesson. Marcello Mastroianni is the weak, self-hating Romano, who tells the story of his wasted life: how he became the spoiled pet of his rich wife (Silvana Mangano), took mistresses (Marthe Keller is one of them), and at a spa was touched by the seriousness of Anna (Elena Sofonova)—Chekhov's woman with the little dog—and, on the pretext of opening a factory, followed her to Russia. At this point, the film turns into a satire of bureaucracy in Imperial Russia as he goes from ministry to ministry trying to get the necessary permit. Mastroianni won the best-actor award at Cannes for his performance in this massive hunk of Italo-Russian kitsch. When he's Romano, it's as if he were putting on a classroom exhibition of how to turn yourself into another person—he shows the class every bit of calculation. It's exemplary; it's horrible. (He's like Paul Muni in "Juarez" and "The Life of Emile Zola.") The cast includes Vsevolod Larionov as the beaming Pavel and Innokenti Smoktunovski as Anna's husband. The script is by Alexander Adabachian and Mikhalkov, with the collaboration of Suso Cecchi D'Amico. In Italian. (10/5/87) (Cinema I.)

Dirty Dancing—Set in a Catskills resort in the summer of 1963, this bright dance musical is about the role that dancing had in the embryonic counterculture. It's also a girl's version of that old phony: the-summer-I-grew-up-and-everything-changed. In the boys' version, the hero typically came down to earth with a jolt. But this is a girl's coming-of-age fantasy: the seventeen-year-old heroine, Baby (Jennifer Grey), ascends to spiritual and sensual perfection. For Baby, a doctor's daughter, the change occurs as the result of self-discovery through dancing and then through her sexual initiation and her full and open commitment to the resort's working-class dance instructor, Johnny (Patrick Swayze). Too many life lessons are learned in this bubble-headed, retro vision of growing up in the sixties, and its wish-fulfillment aspect makes Baby and Johnny and all their dirty-dancing friends pure of heart—it defuses any possible explosiveness in the material. But the director, Emile Ardolino, and the choreographer, Kenny Ortega, use the dancing to bring out the sensual dreaminess of the songs, and the screenwriter, Eleanor Bergstein, writes light, rumpled dialogue that helps you over the hooey. With Cynthia Rhodes, Jack Weston, Jerry Orbach, Honi Coles, Lonny Price, Kelly Bishop, and Jane Brucker. (8/24/87) (Eastside Cinema. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; through Oct. 22. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; starting Oct. 23.)

Dogs in Space—Richard Lowenstein's movie about a houseful of punks, hippies, musicians, and counterculture hangers-on in late-seventies Australia comes on like a rock "Nashville," and has the right spirit for the music: drunk and disorderly. But this sort of reckless energy works better in three-minute bursts than it does over the course of a feature-length film. The movie's chaos gets tedious very quickly, and we have to wait nearly an hour before a few coherent characters and a hint of a story struggle out of the crush of dancing bodies into the light. For those who haven't given up by then, the last half hour isn't bad: Lowenstein pulls off a genuinely wild party sequence, and the grim climax, edited to Iggy Pop's "Endless Sea," is a lovely, haunting music video. The film's star, Michael Hutchence, is the lead singer of the Australian band INXS, for whom Lowenstein directed the sensational video "What You Need." His role seems to have been conceived as a combination of Jim Morrison and Renoir's vagrant Boudu, and he's awful. Also with Saskia Post, Nique Needles, and Tony Helou. Cinematography by Andrew de Groot.—T.R. (57th St. Playhouse; through Oct. 22.)

Fatal Attraction—A primer on the bad things that can happen if a man cheats on his wife. There's sometimes a fine line between sexiness and craziness, and the hero (Michael Douglas), a Manhattan corporate lawyer—a settled married man—isn't hip enough to catch the danger signals when he lets a woman book editor (Glenn Close) talk him into going with her to her loft. Once this woman begins behaving as if she had a right to a share in the lawyer's life, she becomes the dreaded lunatic of horror movies. But with a difference: she parrots the aggressively angry, self-righteous statements that have become commonplaces of feminist fiction, and they're so inappropriate to the circumstances that they're the proof she's loco. They're also the director Adrian Lyne's and the screenwriter James Dearden's hostile version of feminism. The film is about men seeing feminists as witches, and, the way the facts are presented here, the woman *is* a witch. Brandishing a kitchen knife, she terrorizes the lawyer and his family. Basically this is a gross-out slasher movie in a glossy format. It's made with swank and precision, yet it's gripping in an unpleasant, mechanical way. The violence that breaks loose doesn't have anything to do with the characters who have been set up; it has to do with the formula they're shoved into. The picture enforces conventional morality (in the era of AIDS) by piling on paranoiac fear. With Anne Archer as the beautiful homebody wife, Ellen Hamilton Latzen as the bright little daughter, and Stuart Pankin as the clowning pal. Tip-top editing by Michael Kahn and Peter E. Berger. (Dearden's script is an expansion of the forty-two-minute film "Diversion," which he wrote and directed in England in 1979.) (10/19/87) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)



The Funeral—This 1984 comedy was the first film written and directed by Juzo Itami; the second was "Tampopo." "The Funeral" isn't as exuberant and recklessly imaginative as the movie that followed it, but it's a funny and intelligent work in its own, more deliberate way. An Altman-like take on an Ozu theme, the film follows a large, extremely modern Japanese family through the ordeal of arranging a traditional religious funeral. Crowded together for several days in the country house of the deceased, the bewildered relatives seem to be living in a severe formal structure that wasn't designed for them. They're like actors in a poorly rehearsed classical play, on an unfamiliar stage—bumping into each other, blowing their lines, looking anxious and miserable. Itami orchestrates their discomfort with real visual wit, and the genuine grief that lies beneath his characters' farcical panic emerges clearly and unsentimentally. Perhaps the movie works because we feel Itami's empathy for the characters: like them, he's trying to find his way in a form that's a bit too controlled and elegant to accommodate his wilder impulses. With Nobuko Miyamoto and Tsutomu Yamazaki (the stars of "Tampopo"), and Ozu veteran Chishu Ryu. Cinematography by Yonezo Maeda.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza; starting Oct. 23.)

Hope and Glory—A great comedy about the blitz. In this autobiographical film, the writer-director John Boorman has had the inspiration to desentimentalize wartime England and show us the Second World War the way he saw it as an eight-year-old—as a party that kept going day after day, night after night. The movie has a beautiful pop clarity. He doesn't deny the war its terrors, but it does destroy much of what the genteel poor like the Rohans have barely been able to acknowledge they wanted destroyed. Boorman lets his characters say the previously unsayable. Bored with crouching indoors during the nightly raids by the Luftwaffe, the dimply blond fifteen-year-old Dawn (Sammi Davis), the eldest of the three Rohan children, runs outside, watches the firefighters at work on a blazing house, and dances in the Rohans' postage-stamp-size front garden. "It's lovely!" she calls out. The movie is wonderfully free of bellyaching; it's a large-scale comic vision, with ninety-foot barrage balloons as part of the party atmosphere. The large cast includes Sebastian Rice Edwards as the eight-year-old Bill, Geraldine Muir as his little sister, Sarah Miles as his mother, David Hayman as his father, Ian Bannen as his grandfather, and Susan Wooldridge, Derrick O'Connor, and Jean-Marc Barr as the Canadian jokester. (10/5/87) (Baronet.)

Jean de Florette—The setting is Provence in the early nineteen-twenties. As the hunchback Jean de Florette, an educated, nature-loving city fellow who has learned about farming from books, Gérard Depardieu wears "GOOD MAN" in capital letters across his wide brow;

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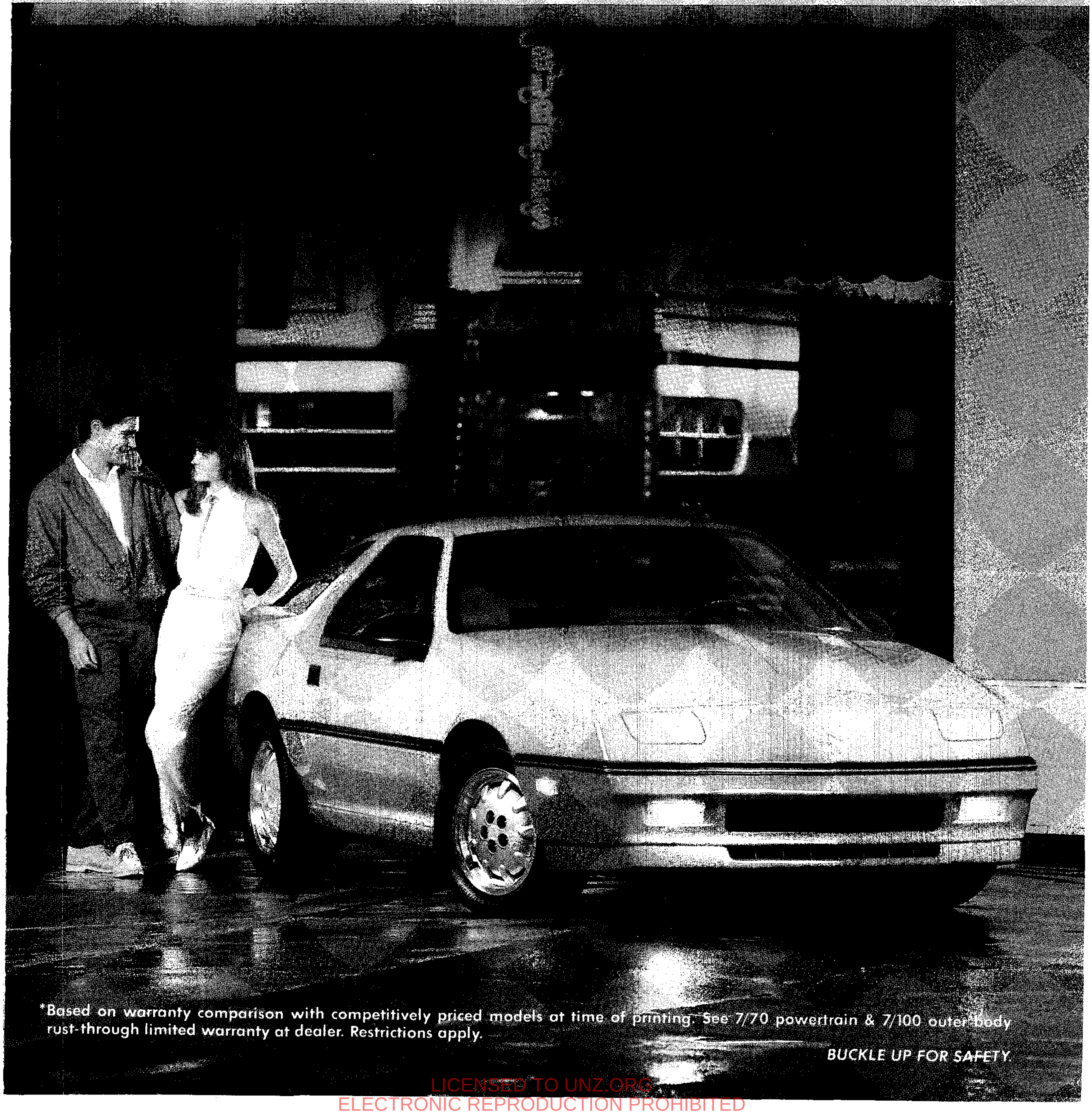

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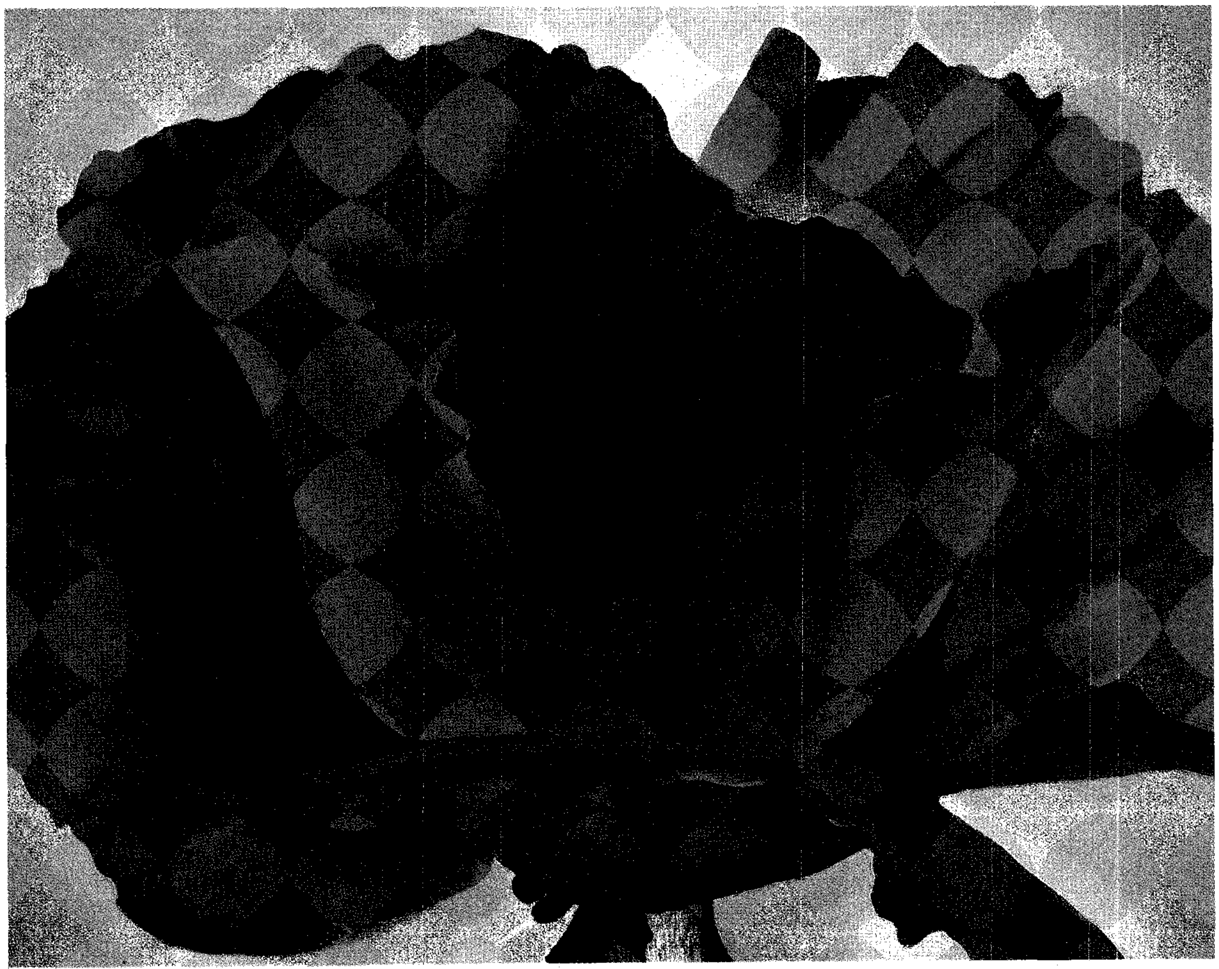
"Still–in a way–nobody sees a flower–really–
it is so small–we haven't time–
and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."
—Georgia O'Keeffe



Red Poppy, 1927 *Oil on canvas 7" × 9", Private collection, Geneva* *Photography by Malcolm Varon*

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE 1887-1986

National Gallery of Art, Washington · November 1, 1987-February 21, 1988
The Art Institute of Chicago · March 5-June 19, 1988
Dallas Museum of Art · July 31-October 16, 1988
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York · November 19, 1988-February 5, 1989

Southwestern Bell Corporation

An exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Art and made possible by a grant from Southwestern Bell Foundation.

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

in smaller letters we can read "He has poetry in his soul." Jean has a devoted wife (Elisabeth Depardieu), who used to sing in opera, and a delicate little daughter named Manon. And for slightly over two hours we watch him trudge across the land he has inherited hauling two barrels of water that are fastened across his hump. When there's no rain, his plants shrivel and his rabbits die, and it's agonizing for us, because we know that there's a spring of fresh mountain water on the land. His neighbors—the prosperous, greedy old peasant César Soubeyran (Yves Montand) and César's dull-witted nephew, Ugolin (Daniel Auteuil)—have hidden the spring under a load of cement, so that Jean will be forced to sell out to them. Adapted from the first volume of Marcel Pagnol's two-part novel "The Water of the Hills," published in 1963 (it was derived from a picture he made in 1952), "Jean de Florette" is to be followed, in November, by "Manon of the Spring." The director, Claude Berri, who did the adaptation with Gérard Brach, aimed for fidelity to the novel; he has said that it was his task to give the material "a cinematic rhythm," but "there was no need for imagination." That's what *he* thinks. The wide-screen cinematography is by Bruno Nuytten. In French. (7/13/87) (Lincoln Plaza.)

MATEWAN—This true story of a bitter, courageous strike by West Virginia coal miners in 1920 is almost stirring enough to survive the primitive and ponderous movie technique of its writer-director, John Sayles. The film aims for the simplicity and emotional purity of folk music—an effect that, in movies, is not so simply achieved. You shouldn't make a picture about the labor movement if you don't know how to give life to crowd scenes, or one that ends with a massacre if you lack the skill to render complex action lucid and comprehensible. Sayles' deficiencies as a filmmaker don't seem to be the products of smugness and arrogance, but (like Bruce Springsteen, for whom he has directed several music videos) he may be taking his populist, blue-collar aesthetic a bit too far: hard work and decent feeling, even in the service of a great subject, aren't always enough. "Matewan"—rousing as it sometimes is—would be a more convincing, even a purer, tribute to American labor if its honest sweat and blood were adulterated with more of an artist's cunning. With Chris Cooper, Will Oldham, David Strathairn, Kevin Tighe, Mary McDonnell, and James Earl Jones. Photographed by Haskell Wexler in the Left-lyrical style of his earlier work on "Bound for Glory."—T.R. (Quad Cinema, and Metro Cinema.)

MAURICE—The director, James Ivory, painstakingly reproduces the limp, drawn-out construction of E. M. Forster's novel, about a young man's struggle to come to terms with his homosexuality. Forster wants to show that homosexuality is natural, and so Maurice is an average Edwardian stockbroker who lives in the suburbs—a proper hale-and-hearty fellow, narrow-minded and snobbish, like others of his (middle) class. The trap for both the novel and the film is Maurice's blandness; the actor who plays him—tall, blond James Wilby—comes across as passive and slow. (You'd think being a gay man was tantamount to being retarded.) Ivory has a fine, trained eye for light and composition, but when it comes to capturing the feel of repression and of bursting desire he isn't there. The movie is suffocatingly discreet, with classical music in the clinches. Hugh Grant plays Maurice's upper-class Cambridge friend Clive Durham, with whom he experiences three years of platonic frustration, and Rupert Graves is Durham's under-gamekeeper Scudder, with whom Maurice finally experiences physical love. Also with Billie Whitelaw, Judy Parfitt, Peter Eyre, Denholm Elliott, Ben Kingsley, Simon Callow, Helena Michell, and Kitty Aldridge. The screenplay is by Kit Hesketh-Harvey and Ivory, the dark-toned cinematography by Pierre Lhomme. (9/21/87) (Paris.)

MY LIFE AS A DOG—Lasse Hallström's film is a gentle, episodic narrative of a twelve-year-old boy (Anton Glanzelius) growing up in nineteen-fifties Sweden. Ingemar, a lively but sensitive kid, gets passed around from household to household when his mother becomes seriously ill. At its best, the movie is very shrewd about the ways children protect themselves from disorienting, and even traumatic, experiences. Hallström's naïveté as a director gives many of the dramatic scenes a touching straightforwardness. But that same quality sabotages the comic passages with a tone of heavy, self-satisfied whimsy. With Tomas von Brömssen, Anki Liden, Ingmari Carlsson, and Melinda Kinnaman. Screenplay by Hallström, Reidar Jönsson, Brasse Brännstrom, and Per Berglund, from Jönsson's novel. In Swedish.—T.R. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza.)

NEAR DARK—The vampires here are a gang of outlaws travelling by van, drifting around the country, hibernating in motels during the sunlight hours. Most of the time they pick off a chance victim, but when they're really bloodthirsty they take over a roadside bar and slaughter everybody in it. This thriller, directed by Kathryn Bigelow, has a nocturnal, erotic atmosphere, shards of wit, and some better performances than are customary in the genre. And it becomes more intense as it goes along. Vampirism is reversible here, so the characters' fates aren't sealed, and this allows for curiosity about what will happen to the melancholy heroine, appealingly played by Jenny Wright. (She bites reluctantly and almost mournfully, yet hungrily.) Bill Paxton, as the most rambunctious of the gang, has a biker's gusto that energizes his scenes. Jenette Goldstein makes an impact, too—she's the mom figure of the pack. The cast includes Lance Henriksen as the dad figure, Joshua Miller as the little brother, Adrian Pasdar as the new inductee, Tim Thomerson, and Marcie Leeds. A painter turned filmmaker, Bigelow (who was a graduate student in film at Columbia) shows a talent for the uncanny; the cinematography, by Adam Greenberg, contributes to the exploitation-movie lyricism that draws you into the horror. The script is by Eric Red and Bigelow; music by Tangerine Dream; editing by Howard Smith. (Criterion Center.)

NO WAY OUT—This is a film noir without malevolence or mystery. It's a Yuppie thriller: it has no psychological layers. Mostly it involves chasing around the glass offices and corridors of the Pentagon (actually Stage 27 at the old M-G-M studios in Culver City). But many people respond to it with hot, jumpy enthusiasm—especially to the high-level friskiness and the display of thigh in a stretch limo. A reworking of the plot of the Kenneth Fearing novel "The Big Clock," filmed in 1948, with Charles Laughton as a Henry Luce figure, the Robert Garland script features Gene Hackman as an arrogant Secretary of Defense who discovers that his mistress (Sean Young) has a lover—though not who it is—and, in a rage, accidentally kills her. His wormy yes-man aide (Will Patton) dreams up the idea that the lover is an as yet undiscovered—perhaps only hypothetical—Russian agent named Yuri, who can be blamed for the murder. Needing a front man for this coverup, they arrange to have a naval hero (Kevin Costner) put in charge of the search to find the lover and "neutralize" him. This naval hero is, of course, the lover, and the movie, told from his point of view, is about his peril. The director, Roger Donaldson, whips the action along, with camera angles changing so fast you hardly have time to ask what the chases are for or why the story points don't follow through. (9/7/87) (86th Street East Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Oct. 22. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Oct. 29.)

THE PICK-UP ARTIST—With Molly Ringwald and Robert Downey, directed by James Toback. (10/5/87) (Gotham Cinema; through Oct. 22.)

THE PRINCESS BRIDE—The director Rob Reiner doesn't have the craft to bring off the kinetic daredeviltry he tries for, and the movie is ungainly—you can almost see the chalk marks it's not hitting. But it has a loose, likable slobbiness. Set in the late Middle Ages in the mythical kingdom of Florin, the picture, from a script written in 1973 by William Goldman, and based on the 1973 novel that he wrote for his children, is an affectionate composite parody of the high points in adventure movies: the duels, the feats of strength, the rope climbing, the black-masked heroes, the swamps, the dungeons with medieval Rube Goldberg torture machines. Cary Elwes, who has a gift for giddy slapstick, is Westley, the blond farm boy who goes to seek his fortune so that he can claim his true love, blond Buttercup (Robin Wright). Westley is captured by pirates, and Buttercup, selected by Crown Prince Humperdinck (Chris Sarandon) to be his bride, is abducted by a trio of ruffians: Wallace Shawn, Mandy Patinkin, and all seven feet five and five hundred and twenty-five pounds of the French-born wrestler André the Giant. The cast includes Christopher Guest as a smarmy six-fingered sadist, Mel Smith as the Albino, Margery Mason as the ancient woman who boos the royal family, and, in scenes that are show-biz bliss, Billy Crystal and Carol Kane, wearing makeup that adds centuries to them, as the retired Miracle Max and his nagging crone, Valerie. These two give the movie a lift that puts it all into perspective. It's shtick softened by childlike infatuation. Peter Falk appears in the framing device. Photographed partly on locations in England and Ireland; Florin Castle is actually Haddon Hall, parts of which date back to the twelfth century. (10/19/87) (Gramercy, Beekman, Guild, New Carnegie, and Embassy 72nd St.)

STAKEOUT—With Richard Dreyfuss, Emilio Estevez, Madeleine Stowe, and Aidan Quinn; directed by John Badham. (8/24/87) (Embassy; through Oct. 22.)

TAMPOPO—With Nobuko Miyamoto and Tsutomu Yamazaki, directed by Juzo Itami. In Japanese. (6/1/87) (Cinema Studio; through Oct. 29.)

THE WHALES OF AUGUST—This is the sort of movie in which dignified old people study the horizon and ask each other, "Have you seen the whales?" It doesn't take much imagination to figure out that those whales are going to stay offscreen for the duration. Bette Davis and Lillian Gish aren't so lucky. Playing a pair of sisters who live together on the Maine coast, they're trapped before our eyes, trying to give a semblance of reality to writer David Berry's clunky, fake-Chekhovian conceits. They get no help from Lindsay Anderson's direction: the rhythm he imposes on the film is punishingly slow, and has the cruel effect of making us irritable and impatient with his elderly characters. Endangered by Anderson and Berry, the actresses somehow manage to escape with their dignity. Also featuring Ann Sothern, in good sidekick form as a gossipy neighbor, and Vincent Price.—T.R. (Cinema II.)

WISH YOU WERE HERE—With Emily Lloyd, Tom Bell, Geoffrey Hutchings, Jesse Birdsall, Pat Heywood, and Heathcote Williams; directed by David Leland. (7/27/87) (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Lincoln Plaza; through Oct. 22.)

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

BY coincidence, in the same week that the Los Angeles Board of Education voted to put its schools on a year-round schedule a friend in Missouri has sent us a copy of an old letter, apparently from the mid-nineteenth century, which he says he found in an attic:

DEAR MRS. PHELPS:

It's been a very productive summer for me, thanks to the new policy of year-round schooling. Let me tell you, I'm not the idler that I used to be. During these three months, I've been studying language arts, biology, geology, health science and personal hygiene, ethics in the contemporary world, and geometry, algebra, trigonometry, and calculus. The language-arts course has been extremely useful, in that I've learned how better to communicate. (You have probably noticed that my syntax and grammar are much improved.) The personal-hygiene course is a delight—so much of it is new to me! The lecture about the hazards of smoking was particularly enlightening—information that Pap neglected to impart to me. The math courses are the toughest—I have to cram about four hours a night just to keep up with the class. But all these months of study have really helped me establish my priorities, and I'm already thinking about college and career. No more wasted moves for me. Judge Thatcher has been urging me to consider a career in law.

We did get a bit of relief from the daily routine last week when the entire biology class took a field trip over to Jackson's Island to collect specimens. The teacher, Mr. Dobbins, complimented me on my ability to identify the aquatic species of the Mississippi River. *He* urged me to consider a career in the biological sciences. Did you know, by the way, that the Mississippi is 2,350 miles long—second only to the Missouri, its primary tributary, in length among American rivers? It drains 1,231,000 square miles of the central U.S. watershed. A major transportation resource!

Mr. Walters, our geology instructor, also took us on a field trip—to McDougal's Cave. We learned about stalactites and stalagmites. Caves can be formed by various means: volcanic action, the chemical and mechanical action of a stream, seeping rainwater, or the action of waves hurtling against a rocky shore. There's a quaint local legend that a reclusive Native American inhabits this particular formation, but our class found no conclusive evidence of his existence.

My most exciting class, by a large measure, is ethics in the contemporary world. It seems that just about every great issue has two sides, and, as luck would have it, we have two teachers for the class rather than one. They were specially hired by the Board of Education to update the curriculum, and—would you believe it?—they're both descended from Europe's royal houses. (They think I should go into investment banking.) The big ethical issue right now, of course, is slavery. Our textbook says that it's a very complicated question, and there is no simple solution.

Speaking of slavery, I guess you've heard that Miss Watson's Jim attempted to run away. He came to me for help in his escape, actually. Talk about ethical questions! I didn't know *what* to do. And my ethics text—by the way, it's been approved by textbook committees in every state—just didn't seem to help. What made it worse, I had a trig final the next morning, and if I didn't do well my grade-point average might slip a notch. And then, just as I sat down to crack the books, there's Jim, talking about taking off down the river on some crude vessel of his own devising. He wanted me to go with him. Can you imagine? As they were taking Jim away, I handed him forty dollars so he could buy himself a little *quelque chose* in jail. The whole episode cost me almost an hour's study time, and I was really nervous when I went to take that exam the next morning. But guess what? I got an A! What a summer!

Ta,
H.

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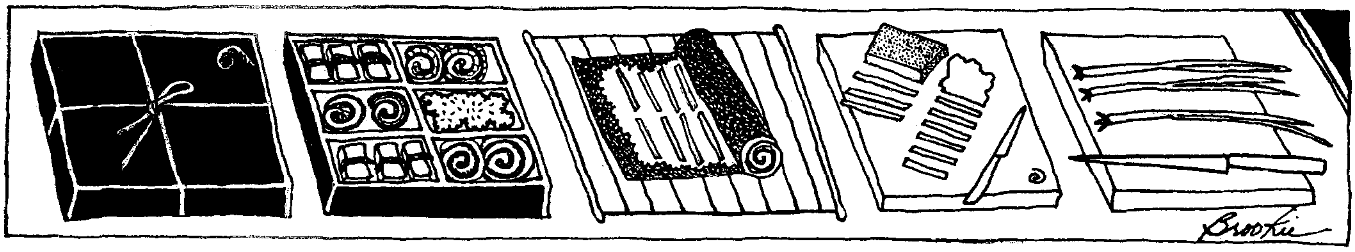
NOTE from an occasional reader of Spanish:

I like the wistfully flamboyant color that *El Diario–La Prensa* uses on its front page: various reds and blues,



normally—good for flags. I like the paper's editorial cartoons, though I often don't get them, since the joke often hangs, incomprehensible, on a single piece of regional slang, unknown to me. But what I like most is things like this headline, which appeared on the paper's back page, in letters nearly two inches high, the day the National League playoff games began:

CON CUATRO LATINOS
Cardenales y Gigantes Inician Esta
Noche en San Luis la Serie de
Playoffs

Or, loosely:

FOUR LATINOS
To Play in the Cardinals-Giants
Playoffs Starting Tonight in
St. Louis

Somewhere in the back of my mind, I suppose, was the thrill of seeing that "San Luis." It almost took the curse off the Cardinals' having beaten out the Mets in the pennant race and being in the playoffs at all. Renamed like that, the entire city of St. Louis might suddenly be a one-street hamlet in New Mexico or (better still) Patagonia. The borderline-Spanish "playoffs" I barely noticed, having for years been learning my Spanish in New York, where languages get fused. (I still have a rush of pleasure, though, whenever I see the word *jonrón*—"home run": it's far more properly shameless and emphatic, I think, than the original, *cuadrangular*.) Gigantes are somehow more gigantic than Giants. And a *cardenal* is not only a bird and a priest but a bruise. Finally, frills aside, what was most satisfying was that banner "CON CUATRO LATINOS"—a large and convoluted enterprise brought down to essentials in three short words.

That day, *El Diario's* local-events page, "Nuestros Barrios," announced a benefit concert (with the Coro de Niños de Harlem), two public hearings (one, run by the Concejo Municipal de Nueva York, on *refugios* for *desamparadas:* homeless women), a parent-teacher meeting, a gala ball in honor of San Anselmo, and a commemorative supper—in *barrios* like Manhattan, the Bronx, Paterson, North Hudson, Passaic, and Filadelfia. The regular "Nuestros Paises" ("Our Countries") news section ran to three pages: boxed groups of stories on El Salvador (peace talks), Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain (floods on the coast), Honduras, Paraguay (human-rights abuses), Guatemala (a tax strike), and Nicaragua (a provisional Miskito Indian–Sandinista truce). Way up front, in a story about criticisms that House Speaker Jim Wright (*presidente de la Camara de Representantes*) had made of the Reagan Administration's Nicaragua policy, the paper had room for one or two quotes from the Speaker that the *Times* hadn't used that day. (One was, roughly, "If anyone asked the United States to change the date of our elections, we'd simply tell them to go to the devil.")

Of course, all New York neighborhoods are famously provincial, and the city's Latino and other communities, neighborly or not, follow suit. Provincialism has its uses, after all. Under some circumstances, there's safety in numbers; and people engaged in a year or more of what one Puerto Rican writer once called "obligatory New York service" sometimes use the paper to take them, briefly—in the mind's ear—home. (A shortstop, say, from San Pedro de Macorís, in the Dominican Republic, gets at least one full sentence to himself in every story on his team, whether he's hit a *jonrón* or gone 0 for 3.) Then, too, one good touch of provincialism counters another. Over the past seven years, various people in the United States government have, in secret and in public, done and said things regarding Latin America that, translated and typeset and plunked on the page, could make an *americano's* hair stand on end. It's as if the Administration saw the southern half of our hemisphere in only minimal, cartoon-report detail, and felt that it could make policy carelessly there, trusting impulse instead of judgment—as if it saw sovereign states merely as provinces. From time to time, *El Diario* steps in and returns the favor, a little bit.

The playoff story, as it turned out, made clear within a couple of lines that that banner head had been mostly—or, at least, partly—a joke. "*Bueeeeeno*," the first sentence began—"*Wellll*." The paper's sportswriter, Juan Vene, noted that four Latinos were indeed going to be playing; in fact, the teams balanced out, with one Puerto Rican and one Dominican each. Vene went on to weigh the two teams' lineups, though; found one wanting; and made his call—San Francisco to win, barring some happy *inspiración* from Cardinal right fielder José Oquendo—in a measured tone suggesting that a sense of proportion might be possible after all, even in baseball.

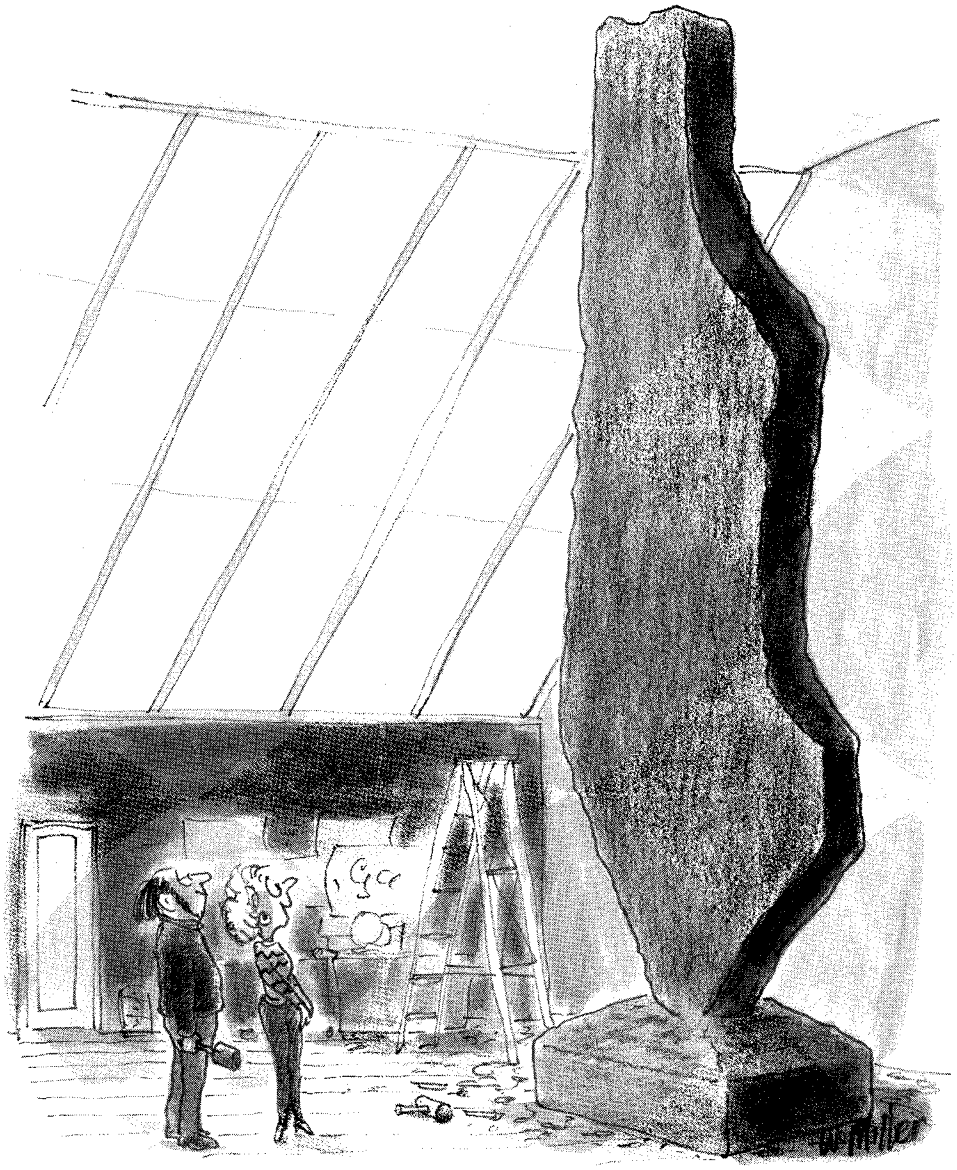
• •

Out of Mongolia

WE were on the road last week, in a van with a troupe of traditional Mongolian singers and dancers headed for a dinner in their honor in New Jersey. The performers, six men and two women, were here to mark the opening of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Mongolian People's Republic. Their leader was Jamtsyn Badraa, a music ethnologist, and Sanjay Altan, a man of Mongolian descent who lives in New Jersey, was serving that evening as driver and translator. Following the van was a car containing members of the Mongolian mission to the United Nations and driven by Tochtoch Gyamcho, who was father hen to the troupe while they were touring the United States. (Ordinarily, Mr. Gyamcho manages a New York City taxi company.)

The dinner was held in the home of a Mongolian engineer with A.T. & T., who has been in the United States for several years. On the mantelpiece in the living room, a small electric sign blinked out the message "Welcome Brothers and Sisters from Mongolian People's Republic." The host and Mr. Badraa exchanged snuff bottles, a Mongolian tradition, and the host circulated among his guests, offering each one a pinch of snuff. Then he and Mr. Badraa sat talking together, and Sanjay Altan explained what was going on. "Mr. Badraa is using all these honorifics to ask him how he is, how old he is—he is seventy-six, Mr. Badraa sixty-two—where he is from, and so on. When Mongolians meet, they have to get acquainted."

While sliced beef, lamb, and vegetables were cooking in broth in two hot pots, everybody drank vodka out of tiny jade glasses. Mr. Badraa proposed a toast, saying (in Mongolian), "We have come from Mongolia to present Mongolian songs and dances. We have come across many oceans and continents. We are very inspired and very happy. I would like to present a small card." He handed the host a postcard signed by members of the troupe, and went on, "We wish you health and happiness, and hope that we will meet in Mongolia one day. And now I would like to sing a song." Mr. Badraa took a sip of vodka, and we heard a baby crying. After a moment, we realized that it was Mr. Badraa. Then he sang in long, low notes, accompanied by Ishdanzan Tsogbadrakh on the *morin khuur*, or horse-head fiddle. Everyone joined in. Sanjay Altan told us that Mr. Badraa's song expressed a wish that the soul might be as free as the steppes. After that, Davaa Tserendavaa, a *khoomei* singer, got to his feet. He is in his early thirties, and, in an entirely modest way, has something of the matinée idol about him. His expression was serene. *Khoomei* singing takes ten or fifteen years of training—a severe and sometimes painful process that changes the vocal cords—and an accomplished *khoomei* singer can produce low notes and high notes simultaneously: in essence, harmonic singing. Mr. Tserendavaa sang a song about a beautiful colt that was lost in a snowstorm. His face became flushed and his neck taut with exertion. He sounded almost like a bagpipe.



"It's wonderful, darling. It really says Manhattan."

• •

The following afternoon, we were in the van again, travelling through the streets of the Bronx. Our objective was the Hope of Israel Senior Citizens Center, where the Mongolians were going to learn an American folk dance. The troupe arrived just as Sandy Freedman, a folk-dance instructor who makes weekly appearances at the Center, was putting a small group of senior citizens (most of them women) through their paces. A tall, energetic white-haired man, he was dressed in bluejeans and a tan cowboy shirt. His dancing partner, Esther, wore a denim skirt, a white blouse, and red boots. "This is called 'Glow Worm,' " Sandy said, switching on the record-player. "We all loved it in kindergarten."

After "Glow Worm," the dancers turned their backs to the audience and leaned into "Blame It on the Bossa Nova," and after that Sandy asked the visitors to step forward. Mr. Badraa demurred, but the others joined in, mixing with the senior citizens to form several lines. Sandy demonstrated the steps of the Virginia Reel. The first run-through—to the strains of "Turkey in the Straw"—was rough. Aush Rentsen (a graduate of the Ulan Bator School of Choreography) do-si-do'd in the wrong direction and looked embarrassed. He was pulled back in line. He did it again, and laughed. Mr. Tserendavaa (who has won gold medals at the Mongolian Festival of Nationalities) smiled imperturbably. Esther tapped her red boots and twirled her skirt.

Sandy said, "Now let me show you an American novelty dance. It's called Salty Dog Rag." Dashjamts Nyamtsoo and Tsegmid Altangerel stood to one side and watched Sandy and Esther sail through a series of kicks, ankle clicks, and festive hand waving. Then Sandy took Dashjamts' hand and walked her through the steps of the dance. She caught on fast, her small feet deftly copying the moves of Sandy's big white sneakers. Next, Sandy and Dashjamts and Esther and Tsegmid danced the Salty Dog Rag together, and then Dashjamts and Tsegmid took the floor and sailed through it without a hitch. They got a nice round of applause.

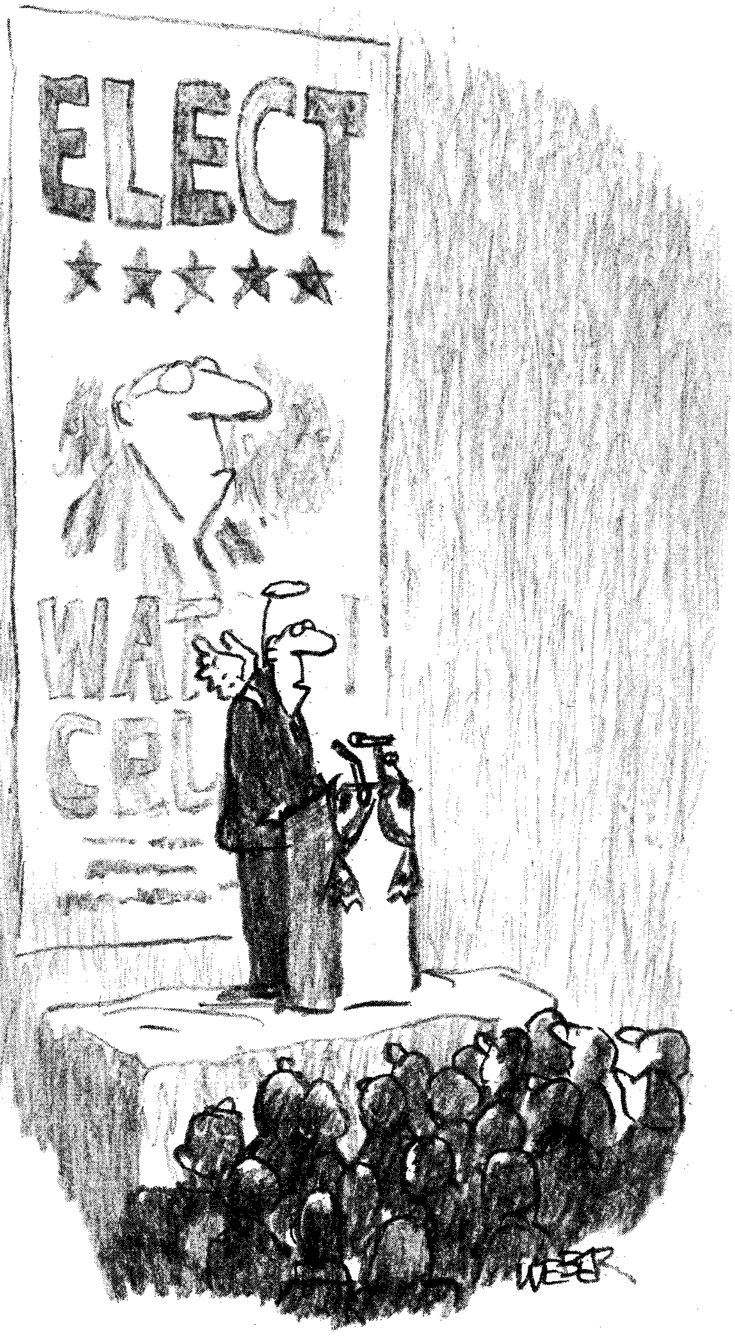
As a thank-you, Batchuluun Sarantuya sang a song about the Kherlen River, and Mr. Tserendavaa, his face once again turning dark with exertion, demonstrated his art, with a song that evoked the remote and ancient life of the steppes. The senior citizens appeared to be transfixed.

Sandy Freedman said to us, "Amazing," and added, "One of the ladies wants to do a Lindy Hop with one of the Mongolians. I told her they never *heard* of the Lindy Hop."

That night, the first of the group's three New York performances took place, in a small theatre at the Asia Society. The house was full. In robes of marigold-yellow or blue or burgundy-red silk, the dancers danced, the singers sang, and the musicians played. We saw a milk-splashing dance, and heard "Temeen Teshee" ("Camel Run") played on the mouth harp. Dashjamts Nyamtsoo performed "Ayagatai Biyelge" ("Bowl Dance"), demonstrating *biyelge*—an upper-body dance, which probably developed because of the limited space inside a yurt. Four members of the troupe sang "Altai Magtaal" ("In Praise of the Altai Mountains"). Like the others, they performed for their audience and for each other, and, in public as in private, their manner was modest and pleasing. During intermission, we heard a man say, "They *look* at you."

Therapy

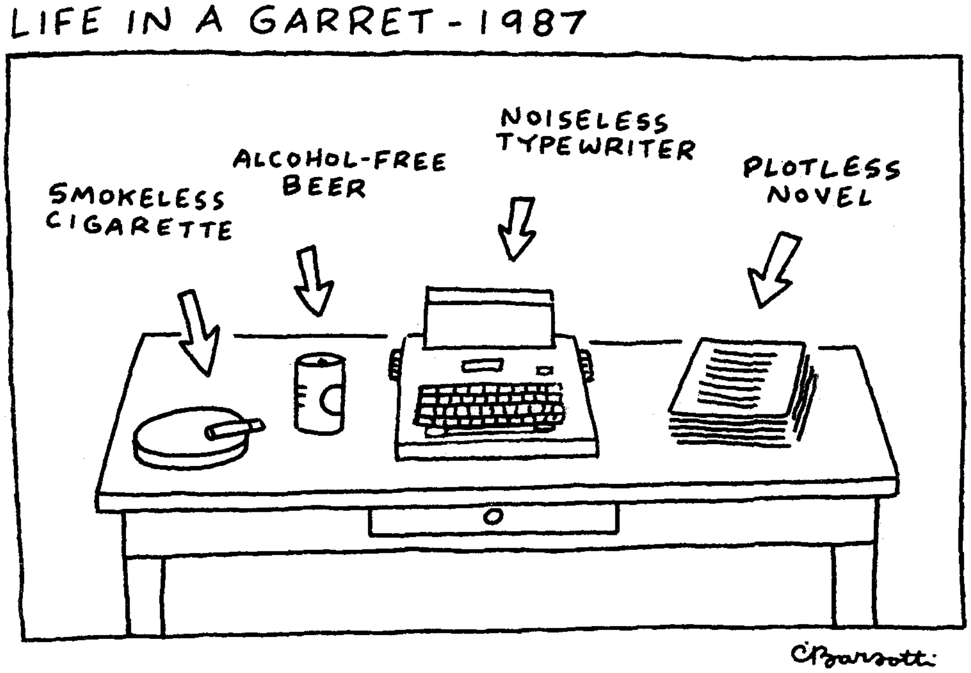
THE other afternoon, we heard a harrowing story of violence and betrayal, told by a young woman named Paulette. "We had a great day Tuesday," she said. "He was acting friendly, he wasn't acting mean. I made him a lovely chicken soup, we had delicious ice cream. And then Shawnee"—a Lhasa Apso that Paulette had rescued, groomed, and nurtured—"leaped up and bit me on the nose. I've been eating out now since that happened. He doesn't let me eat at the table. I have to stand up next to the refrigerator."



"Finally, let me put to rest the so-called 'character' issue."

Paulette's story was one of many stories—sad, angry, spooky—we heard when we attended a group-therapy session for pet owners held at the Animal Medical Center, on East Sixty-second Street. Under the guidance of Susan Phillips Cohen, the center's social worker, pet owners meet every second Saturday to talk about pets who have died or who are fading fast or face other mortal threats (the mortal threat in Paulette's case being Paulette herself, who was trying to decide what to do with the dog). The pet owners let it all pour out, because the Animal Medical Center is one place where they can be sure someone won't tell them that they're crazy—that little Herbie was only a *cat*. At the start of each meeting, Mrs. Cohen drops a big box of Kleenex on the floor. Regulars grab a couple of tissues even before things get going.

"For a lot of people, it's enough to know that they're *not* crazy, and that other people feel the same way," Mrs. Cohen had told us when we stopped by her office before that day's meeting. She is forty-three and reminded us a little of the way Donna Reed looks in "It's a Wonderful Life," although Mrs. Cohen is shorter and her hair is a youngish gray. With her in her office, a small, windowless one on the fifth floor of the medi-



cal center, she has Angus, a plush cat, and Lilly, a poodle hand puppet. The loss of a pet can hit city people especially hard, she told us, because city people often have to share a great part of their lives with their pets. "You're living in a very small apartment, and when you come home your pet is always there. Your pet is very likely to sleep in the bedroom, very likely on the bed. That's a pretty intimate relationship. And who else gets to sit with you while you're having a bath?"

She took us on a brief stroll through the center's walk-in clinic, where she spends part of her day scanning medical charts for indications that owners might need her help. The letters "S.O." on a chart serve as a good tip. They stand for "sign-out record," meaning that the pet is about to be euthanized. Mrs. Cohen stopped to read one of the charts. "It says 'Nineteen years old, very thin, not eating four days.' See, you already know we've got something going on here."

The therapy session that followed took place in a conference room that extended over Sixty-second Street. The windows were covered with black shades, and traffic sounds drifted in and mixed with the conversation.

"He ripped all this open," Paulette said, showing the group her right hand. "Look at these marks. This happened on the tenth, but you can still see it. I had to take two weeks off from work."

"Now, some people would say the obvious thing is to bring that dog to the hospital and put him to sleep, right?" Mrs. Cohen said, looking around at the group. Then, to Paulette, softly, "What's going on?"

"Sometimes the kindest thing you can do for an animal is give it some peace," said Liz, sitting opposite.

Everybody got a chance to talk, with Mrs. Cohen only occasionally intervening—to quell cross-conversations, or guide the group from story to story, or regulate the flow of pet snapshots that moved now and then around the circle of chairs. Liz talked about Paradox, her ailing dachshund, and passed two pictures around clockwise. Mrs. Silva, who had already told the group about the death of her fifteen-year-old dog, Smokey, took this as a cue and sent a snapshot counterclockwise. "Excuse me," Mrs. Cohen said quietly. "Could we maybe just for now concentrate on Liz? We'll pass the other picture around later. Why don't you just hang on to it for a second?" The snapshot stopped where it was.

There were gasps when Dana described the crisis facing a friend's dog. It was being shuttled from neighbor to neighbor after the friend's husband had abused it, and now the friend planned to euthanize it.

"I'd get rid of the husband first," said H., a young woman in black and white. (She lives with the suspicion that her own dog was the victim of foul play—possibly poisoned in the course of a landlord-tenant dispute.)

"I've been lucky." Josephine was speaking now. "I've had a couple of spiritual experiences." She pulled out a framed photograph of her cat Joey, who had been dead for over a year. Josephine declared that Joey had come back for a visit. "This thing—this fist-shaped shadow—came whizzing by, making arcs on the curtain. Make of it what you will—nobody was there except my other cats, and they're not going to make themselves into fist shapes. Somebody tell me what else that could have been."

As the group mulled this over, Mrs. Cohen asked, "Does anybody who knows Josephine see anything different? I mean, is it just me or does she seem a little different?"

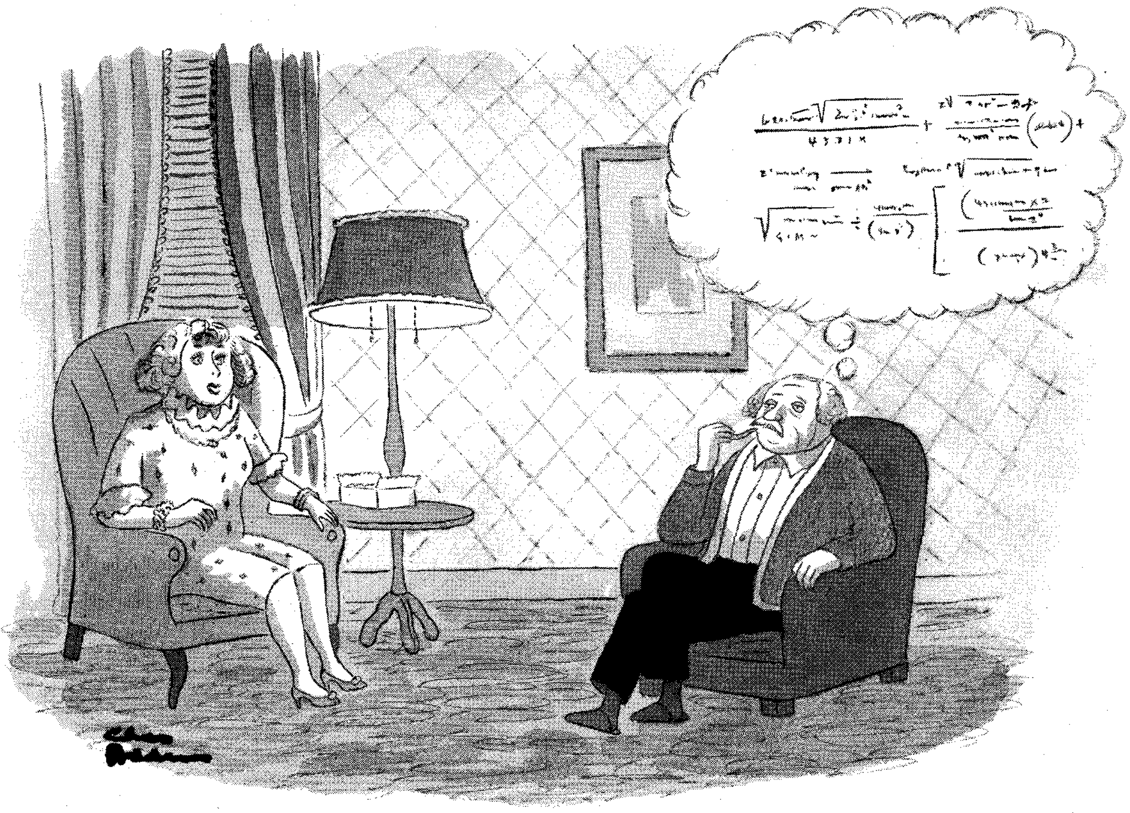
"She looks better," said Eleanor, who had been coming to the meetings ever since the death of her dog Scruffy, three years ago.

"There's a smile," Mrs. Cohen said. "But there's also a passion, a level of emotion. You've been very sad but very flat. But today"—Mrs. Cohen clenched her hand and swung it through the air—"you have *oomph* behind you."

Mini Golf

WE'RE all for the back-to-bowling movement, and we like short plaid cheerleader skirts, on the right people, and we feel that the revival of the peanut-butter-and-marshmallow sandwich is a righteous cause. We were glad to see "Leave It to Beaver" back on TV. We're actually in favor of resurrecting every part of our pre-teen life except homework. And since regular rounds of miniature golf had been another staple of ours between the ages of ten and twelve we thought it was about time we renewed our appreciation of the sport.

AN OCCASION TO DO SO: We were invited last week to Ken Brown and Lisa Crafts' miniature-golf-course-slide-show party. Lisa is an animator and Ken is a cartoonist. Ken has bushy black hair and a mustache, and wears



"A penny for your thoughts."

• •

suspenders most of the time. He occasionally appears in his own cartoons; for instance, he's the nervous-looking man in the octopus-print top in his book "Speak Softly and Wear a Loud Shirt." Besides doing cartooning, Ken makes videos and slide shows about his three favorite subjects: the end of the consumer cycle (flea markets and dumps), people's private obsessions (such as collecting toy robots or salt and pepper shakers), and twentieth-century indigenous vernacular art (roadside attractions). He's currently preoccupied with miniature golf.

The Setting: Ken and Lisa's loft, in Tribeca, whose furnishings include six racks of old postcards, some rubber and metal alligators, several Cootie Bugs, dozens of toy skeletons, a gigantic Super Dodgems poster, an old papier-mâché polar bear, and two advertising flyers for "Carter the Great—The World's Weird Wonderful Wizard." "I would love a weekend in the year 1910," Kent told us. "This loft is as close as I'll ever get."

The Guests: They numbered about forty and included members of both the art and the miniature-golf communities. The guest of honor, more or less, was Maria Reidelbach, co-author (with Nina Garfinkel) of "Miniature Golf," which is the first book on the subject since 1930 and the first book in history to have a piece of artificial turf on the cover. According to Maria, people seem to enjoy petting the cover. "I heard about Ken through a friend at a toy store, and I was so excited to hear about someone else interested in miniature golf," she told us. "He and I really feel the same way about the value of miniature golf. It's sort of an undiscovered form of folk art. In my opinion, it compares favorably with European formal gardens. Instead of statues of Apollo and Diana, we have Princess Tina the Pink Octopus."

The Pictures: "For those of you who would like to watch 'Mini Golf: The Movie,' I have it on continuous loop on the video monitor," Ken announced when all the guests had gathered. "I'm going to start the slides now." The first pictures were of courses in Ocean City, New Jersey, where nursery-rhyme themes abound: among the obstacles were Humpty-Dumpties, Little Bo Peeps, and Mother Gooses. Slides of courses on the Maryland shore, where jungle themes and giant cowboy boots are popular, were followed by pictures of an abandoned pier in Wildwood, New Jersey, where Ken and Lisa discovered some abandoned mini-golf creatures, including an elephant, a giant skull, and a buffalo.

"You should have brought them home!" someone called out.

"I would have liked to, but we had a small car," Ken replied.

Great Examples of Mini-Golf Design: "The jungle and nursery-rhyme themes are nice, but I prefer the personal-vision course," Ken said. "I once met a guy who designed a course where each obstacle was a representation of one of the great themes in world history. I also saw a total Halloween course, with witches and pumpkins, and one that was all nautical—the clam shells opened and closed, and the whale spouted. In fact, every obstacle moved. It was a tour de force of the mechanical course." He paused, laughed, and said, "Did I actually just *say* that?"

An Outstanding Moment: Ken and Lisa's discovery, a few years ago, of Goofy Golf, in Biloxi, Mississippi. Ken made a movie about it—his first miniature-golf documentary. "Goofy Golf was a real vision, by a real mini-golf artist," Lisa said. "It was amazingly big, bold, and original. There was a sphinx, and a Buddha, and a missile, and a monkey whose tail swung back and forth. All in all, it was an incredible landscape to behold."

Other Courses: "I recommend the Jones Beach course," Maria Reidelbach said. "It's pretty strange. It's based on New York state parks. The obstacles are things like miniature tents and a little highway and a little carrousel, and there's even a replica of the Moses water tower."

Best Obstacle at the Party: The Goofy Golf hors-d'oeuvre tray—a seven-hole miniature-golf course that Lisa had made from food. There was a cucumber-and-carrot windmill (we'd always found the windmills very tricky), a celery-and-cream-cheese dinosaur, a sushi snake, and a par-3 skull of cheese and dill. "I can't eat this," one guest complained to her companion. "It's art."

POST-SEASON KNUCKLERS

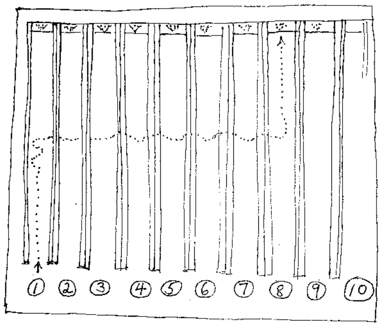
> Researchers armed with computer and wind tunnel are finally taking the measure of baseball's most demonic challenge to science, the knuckleball. . . . Recent simulations show . . . that a knuckleball can veer more than once in flight. . . . Scientists . . . calculate that, under certain conditions, the knuckleball undergoes an aerodynamic "crisis" that warps its trajectory in midflight. . . . The pitch is hard to throw: a pitcher must dig his first two fingers into the ball, his knuckles protruding, and launch it forward with as little spin as possible. . . . A properly hurled knuckleball seems to make up its own rules on its way to the plate. It floats, flutters, twitches, lurches, and dives.
>
> —*James Gleick in the Times.*

DESPITE the end of the baseball season (and the retirement of Phil Niekro, one of the last great hurlers of the weird pitch), the knuckleball has begun to have an impact beyond the ballpark, making its bizarre influence felt in a variety of non-baseball areas.

ALLEY ASTONISHER

Shunning the finger holes on his beloved sixteen-pound maroon bowling ball "Star Wars," ace kegler Sal Jay of Staten Island's Melody Lanes balances the ball on his fingertips and thumb and delivers it toward the pins with no visible spin. The ball routinely travels at a leisurely speed halfway down Alley No. 1 before wobbling and turning to the right, and then crosses Alley Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 to Alley No. 8, where it turns left, regains its original pace, and always scores a strike. Despite his remarkable skill, Jay has no national or league standing. The strikes and invariably perfect games he scores are officially attributed to whichever player is using Lane No. 8.

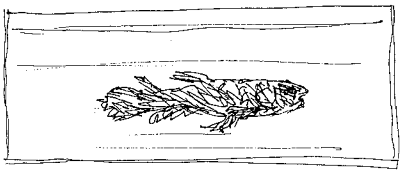
Sal's Astonisher (Aerial View)



PISCINE PUZZLER

A group of Australian marine biologists in the Indian Ocean, attempting to track the rare and elusive coelacanth—the three-hundred-and-fifty-million-year-old species of fish believed extinct until its discovery off South Africa in 1938 (and which West German scientists recently managed to photograph undersea for the first time)—were surprised to learn that one of the ancient lobe-finned creatures was spotted last week in Ted Koppel's swimming pool in Potomac, Maryland.

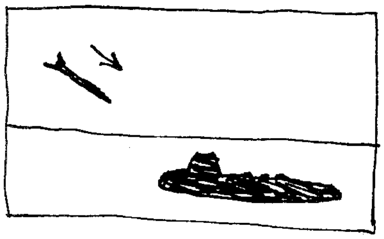
Latimeria chalumnae in Malibu



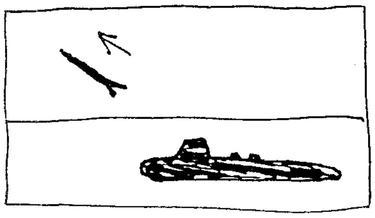
FEDERAL FLUTTER AND FLOAT

After the Senate Appropriations Committee last April voted down twenty billion dollars for the Air Force's ASLM (anti-submarine laser missile), the same amount turned up this September in the Navy's budget request for its ALMS (anti-laser-missile submarine).

Air Force Proposal



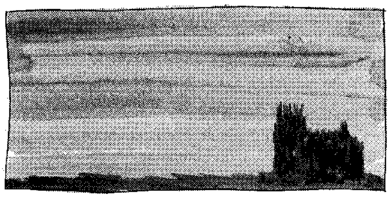
Navy Proposal



POETIC PITCH

Few scholars would have thought that a line from an obscure nineteenth-century British poem might one day "swerve" across the Atlantic to become the basis for a popular American song. Nevertheless, in his lengthy elegy "Ne'er O'er the Abbey's Eyrie I" Tennyson's contemporary Sir Cobleigh Knorne (1804-83) almost certainly threw a literary knuckler. Who can deny that the sixteenth-stanza lines "Wrath-wrappèd now in sombre hue/Gray palls of ire" must have inspired the gifted American composer and pianist Jerry Lee Lewis in the nineteen-fifties?

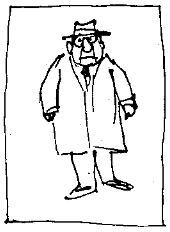
Knorne's Abbey (Twilight)



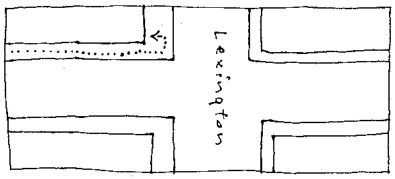
PEDESTRIAN INSTABILITY AND BREAK

After work, Leo M. Bascom heads home, walking swiftly toward a nearby I.R.T. station. Approaching Lexington Avenue, Bascom falters, experiences slow roll and increased drag, then a sharp mid-course correction, and plunges into the Shamrock Bar.

Bascom



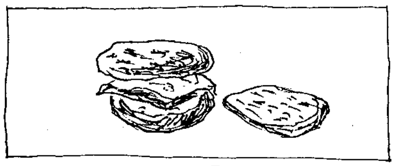
Bascom's Break



CULINARY CRISIS

TV chef Jean-Jacques Jambon ("Masterpiece Kitchen," Channel 13) had put the final on-air touches to his famous Anise Fig Tart with Candied Violets, popped the dessert into the oven in order to turn its meringue golden brown, and was delivering a few remarks on how to lard a hare when smoke began emanating from the oven. Opening the door, Jambon was perplexed to find no sign of his fig tart but, rather, a slightly burned English-muffin sandwich containing a fried egg, a slice of ham, and melted American cheese, with a side order of hash browns.

Chef's Disappointment



—JAMES STEVENSON

ALPHA

WE never suspected that we would be moving until we were all in the car, one late spring day, driving to Minnesota to see our Grandma and Grandpa Jones, and, not far from home, a sound came from outside like a shotgun blast. My brother Jerome and I stood up behind the front seat, and our sister, Marie, sitting in Mom's lap in the front, screamed as the car plunged toward the side of the road with a flapping sound. We slid to a halt, finally, on the shoulder, beside a deep ditch.

"Blowout," Dad said.

"Oh," Mom said, and moved Marie, three now, next to the door and bent over the baby, Susan, lying asleep on the front seat, and held up a hand to shade her face from the sun that projected silhouettes of crushed red-and-yellow bugs, drying across the windshield, over them all. "It scared me. There's no spare, I suppose."

"Alpha, dear, is there ever a spare when you need one?" Dad said.

"What about that place up there?"

On every side, early-planted fields shimmered in the heat, each one tilting at a different angle until the arch of sky, bright blue, settled against them at the end of sight. It was the kind of view I imagined whenever Dad mentioned that our great-grandfather Neumiller had homesteaded here, in North Dakota—as if a home steadied the lay of this land like an anchor. A distance ahead, at a slight curve, a barn with a fence angling out to the highway stood so red against the sky it seemed I could smell paint, and across the road from it a gray-weathered house, with gables facing in four directions, rested on the only rise for miles.

"Deserted, I'm sure," Dad said. "I've never seen a soul there."

"Nor I."

There was a rustle behind us, and Jerome and I allowed our little brother Tim, five, to push his way between us, to see out.

"Somebody probably rents the fields," Dad said.

"I assume," she said.

Dad struck the steering wheel so hard it quivered in the dappled light. "This is exactly why I want to move to Illinois!"

"Oh?" she said, and Jerome and I looked at one another over Tim, and the sad bands of Jerome's blond eyebrows rose high.

"Something like this is always happening," Dad said.

"It wouldn't in Illinois?"

"Well . . ." We waited to hear any more about Illinois, and then I moved to a side window, finally feeling fear from the car gone wild, and stared out. It was 1950, a year I'd looked forward to, because it meant I wouldn't number years in the forties anymore, as I'd been doing since I could remember, but start a new decade; I was almost done with the third grade, and Jerome the fourth, and I'd always felt we would stay in North Dakota until we were buried here, like our great-granddad.

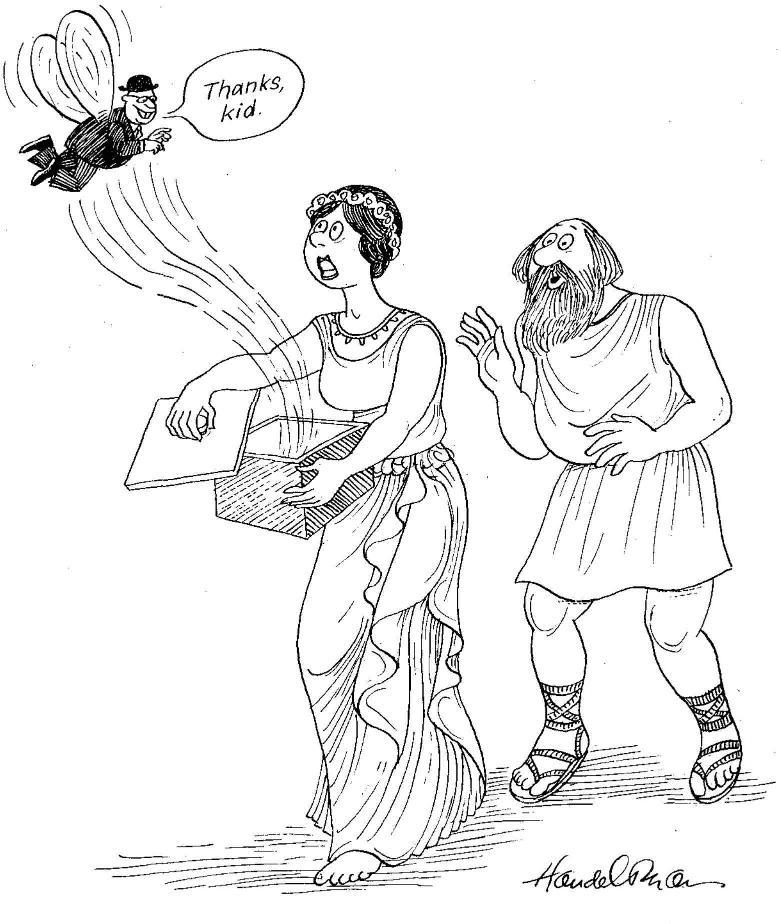
"There would be family there," Dad said. His parents, our Grandma and Grandpa Neumiller, had moved to Illinois before Jerome and I were born, and Grandpa ran a carpentry business there, with our uncles as his workmen. Dad had six brothers and two sisters in Illinois, and now this group of aunts and uncles also seemed to be crowded into the car.

"There isn't family here?" Mom asked. "My folks don't count?"

Dad sighed and took hold of the wheel; he had been a high-school teacher for ten years but had no patience explaining things to his own family, as Mom sometimes said. He was the superintendent in our home town, Hyatt, and this was his first vacation in a year, and he was taking it only because Grandpa Jones wasn't well. "Of course they do. But they're not quite next door, Alpha."

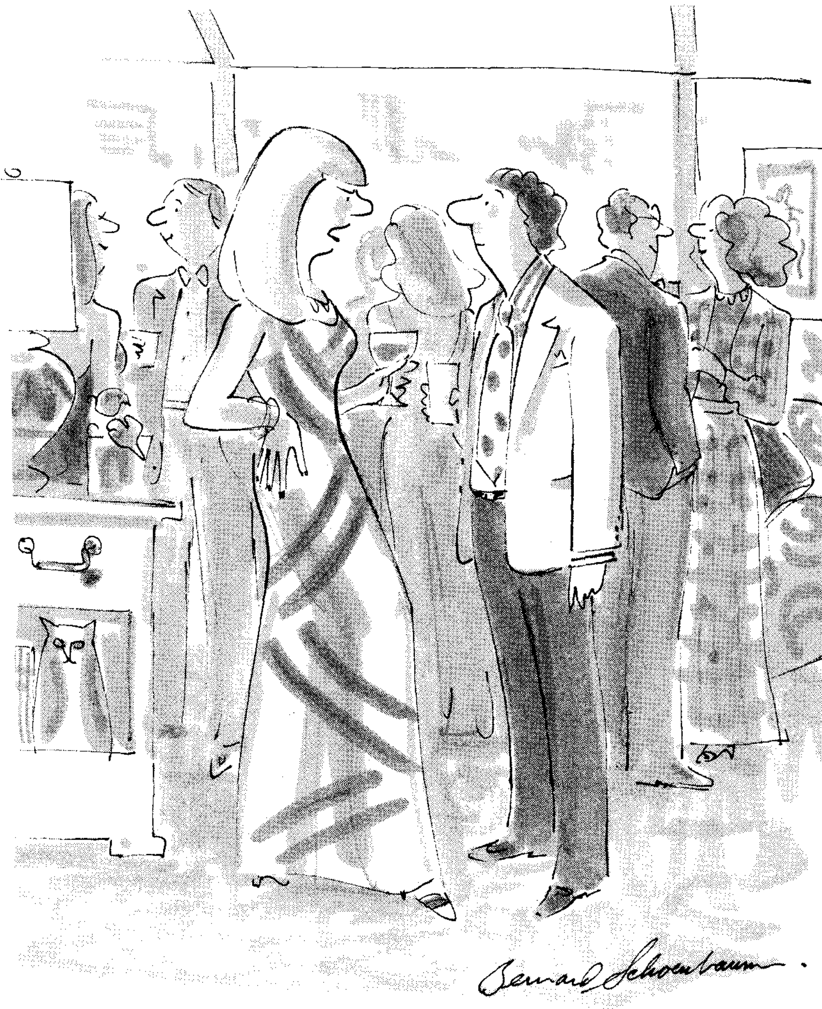
"You'd want that? You'd want to live next door to your folks?"

Dad shrugged and raised his hands, open, beside the steering wheel, and the silhouettes of shadow darkened over his palms as if drawing into focus there. And it was hardly a skip *in time, it* seemed, from that day to the day Jerome and I were in the back seat again, on our knees, with our elbows on the ledge under the rear window, watching a trailer filled with our belongings, and covered with a tarp, hop in time to the haste that had us leaving Hyatt, as far as we knew for good.



Just as Epimetheus had been warned, Pandora opened the mysterious box and permitted the escape of Insider Trading.

MOM is pregnant again. Or must be, since she has started wearing smocks, although there's hardly a bulge. She comes down the basement stairs sideways, one foot down on a step, then the other, *clump*-clump, *clump*-clump—her hand squeaking along the wooden rail, so you always know it's her. We're staying



"Oh, yeah? Care to step outside and say that?"

in the basement of the new house Grandpa Neumiller is building, in Forest Creek, Illinois, along with Grandma and Grandpa and two of our uncles, Tom and Davey ("We're certainly next door here," Mom has said), until the rest of the house is finished or Dad finds us a place of our own. Nothing is certain, except that we're here. We expect to live in Pettibone, five miles away, or so everybody hopes, and Davey has taken Jerome and me on a tour of Pettibone—where an aunt and uncle live—in case we go to school there. Davey is difficult for us to understand; he's our uncle, but only three years older than Jerome, and next year starts high school. Dad calls him a prodigy, which might refer to his stomach, since Davey often slaps it and cries, "This ain't no wattymelon here!"

The corner of the basement where Jerome and I are lying, playing cribbage, feels crowded, as if Mom is down the stairs and standing over us, or Tom. Tom is as tall as Dad, with Dad's curly dark hair—always out dating, even on week nights—and acts as if he doesn't want us here; whenever he stares at any of us children his eyes seem to turn red. I shove aside the cribbage board, no longer interested in this game Grandpa has taught us. Everybody here gets between me and Jerome, and there are days he doesn't seem my brother, I hate him so much.

Mom goes to the ironing board, in the offset behind the basement stairs where the cupboard, stove, shower, refrigerator, and washing machine are, wets a finger, taps it to the iron with a sizzle, and starts ironing a pair of Grandpa's suntans. Grandpa had told Dad (so Mom has told us) that there would be a principal's position for Dad in the new school district once we moved here, but now even this seems unsure, and Dad is trying to find a job as a teacher. Mom's face is empty of expression as she bears down so hard on the iron that her hair swings out and strands of it coil and dance with the clumps she causes by setting the iron off firmly on each stroke.

"Darn," she says. "One thing at a time, little Mrs. N." She grabs a pop bottle with a sprinkler on it from the squared end of the board and shakes out spurting drops that spatter over the pants with a sound like rain on a roof, which reminds me of another room where the three of us once paused to listen like this. In our house in North Dakota? I try to picture that place, and the beginning of a stairway appears.

"I ain't going to play anymore," I say to Jerome, and get up and lie on the cot where he and I slept, head to feet, until yesterday, when Grandma took us to a half-finished room upstairs, with a single window boarded over with plywood, and said that Tim would have to join us on the high double bed standing at the level of our eyes in noonday darkness.

"Don't say 'ain't,' Charles," Mom says.

"O.K." That stairway. In my memory a door swings out from it, over gray-blue linoleum—a pattern with yellow lines dividing it into diamonds. Is memory a thing I can run? How neat. Stair steps fall into place like cards above a girl sitting on an army cot. Jerome and I, among the legs of older people, are on our butts in the middle of a furnace grate, where we float, no floor beneath, on rising heat. It's dark out, and the door to the attic stands open behind the girl, its knob above her appearing as big as a globe, with brown light on the tall, scary steps—it's our next-to-last house in Hyatt, I remember now. The legs of the people move, and the girl moves the things like pipes, with curved bands for her wrists, that she thumped into the room on, and stands them up beside the cot. She shakes back her hair and looks out from glasses her eyes swim against, bulging blue, and Mom cries out that she never would have thought of having her sleep upstairs if she'd known! An aunt says to her, "That's O.K., dearie. Hardly anybody's heard yet. It came on so sudden. Polio." "Polio" goes around the room on different tongues, and in the midst of the sound I find myself hoping that Mom doesn't get it, and then I turn to Jerome, and his look says, *This will happen to you.*

"Don't say 'ain't' and 'yur ole' this and 'yur ole' that, or 'she's a doozie,' " Mom says now, in a louder voice. She's imitating the way Tom and Davey talk, although they always seem to be imitating somebody else, or making fun. Was the girl on the cot a school friend of Mom's? Her cousin? I can't remember.

Mom slams the iron down and I sit up.

"Do you hear? Don't say 'ain't' or 'dang' or 'son of a buck,' or fur your 'R's till I feel I'm in a cocoon. You're not a pair of hicks!"

From her corner she can't see Davey step out of Grandpa's office behind us, where he's been napping, and stand in the doorway dazed and groggy, his plump face flat and open as the moon.

"I can't stand it anymore!" she cries. "I ain't gonna do this, or that ain't the way we do it here in yur ole Ella-noise, until I'm so sick of such uncivilized talk I could puke! Do you *hear*?"

"Well, gee," Davey says, "I—" And then he runs stomping past her up the stairs.

ON THE RIVER

My brother has an old rowboat
moored to a dock at the foot
of Jefferson Avenue, Detroit.
Once a week in decent weather
he rows out to get a better
look at the opposite shore,
as though Canada truly were
a foreign country. It isn't easy,
what with the ore boats' lazy
crawl toward salt water, the launches
of tourists and cops, the lunchers
spread out on barges, docks, rafts,
waiting for the oiled clouds to lift
a moment and unveil the sun,
waiting for the fumes of exhaustion
to blow off in the poor gusts
of our making—collective breaths,
passing trucks, running dogs loath
to return to their chains.
On schedule he comes at noon
or not at all—his only free time—
so he can see with a painter's eye
the hulking shapes of warehouses define
themselves, the sad rusts and grays
take hold and shimmer a moment
in the blur of air until the stones
darken like wounds and become nothing.
He does this for our father,
who parked each week exactly here
to stare at that distant shore
as though it were home, and then
passed quietly to a farther one.
He does this for me, who long ago
stopped seeing beneath the shadows
of concrete and burned brick towers
the flickering hints of life, the colors
we made of fresh earth and flowers
coming through the wet smells of houses
fallen in upon themselves. I suppose
he does this also so that somewhere
on the face of the black waters
he can turn, feathering one oar
slowly, to behold his own life
come into view brick by dark brick,
bending his back for all it's worth,
as the whole thing goes up in smoke.

—PHILIP LEVINE

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"ARE you out for the exercise, or what?"

Jerome and I are walking back from our first week at school in Pettibone. We're going to our Aunt Rose Marie's, where we'll be picked up for our ride back to Forest Creek by whoever is working nearest to town on one of Grandpa's carpentry crews. Now a black panel truck crawls up behind us, and the window glides down on our side. "I say, are you guys out for the exercise, or what?"

It's Tom, leaning so far toward us that his curly hair droops over his forehead. I look around. How can we get to our Aunt Rose Marie's from school except walk?

"I mean, coming around this way!" Tom yells out the window, irritated. "I've been following you guys for over a block!"

"This is the way we go," I say, when Jerome's face takes on the tight-lipped blankness that means he won't talk.

"Why, you can come right down there!" Tom cries, and points to the street at our side.

"This is the way Davey showed us," I say.

"Oh, hell, he probably wanted you to see the Del-ta," Tom says, and laughs. "Where they have *movie shows*." Davey indeed took us past the Delta on his tour of town, and we've been reading the posters on its front and red brick side as we walk past it every day. "Any fool can see this street runs straight through!" Tom cries. "You've been going five blocks around!"

Jerome looks down, ashamed, and I turn away to keep walking.

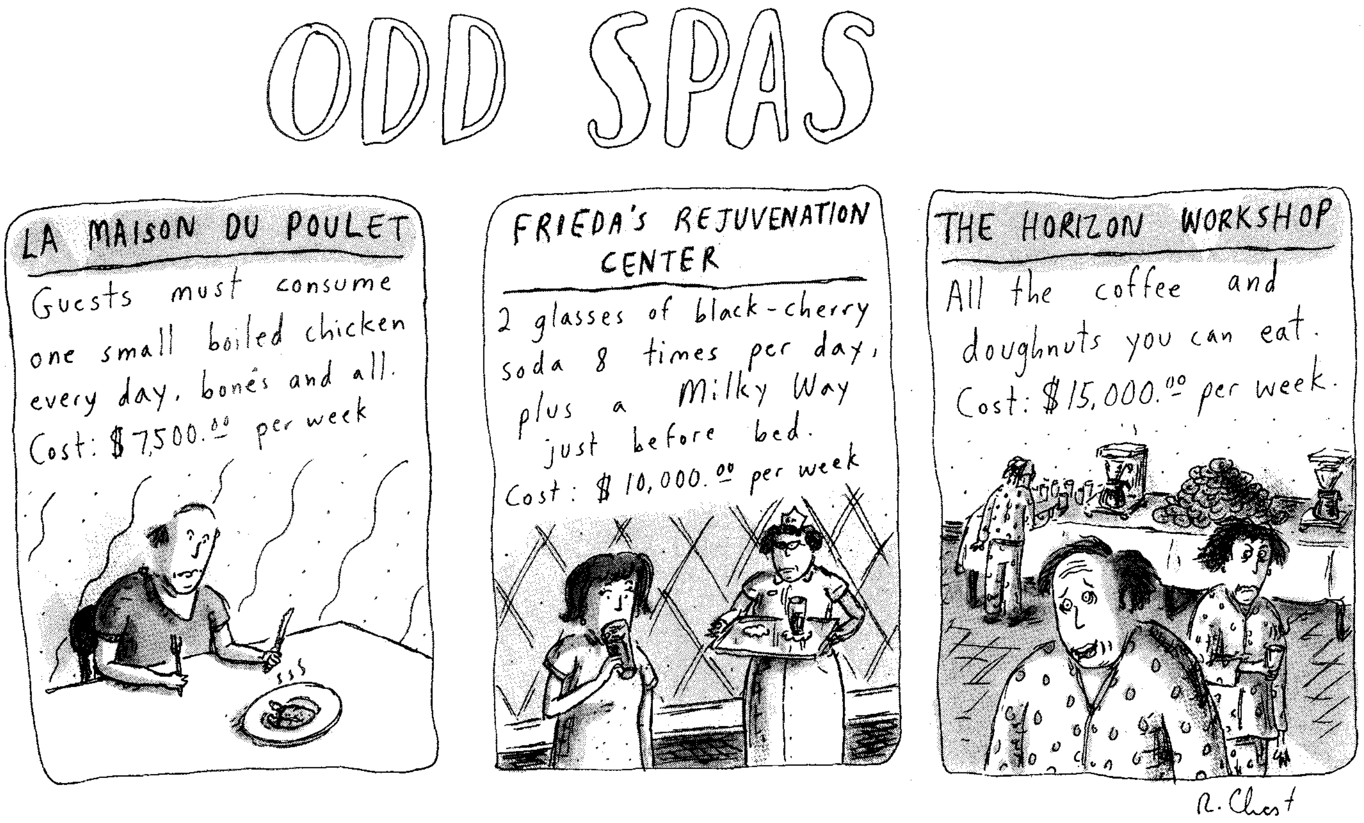
But Tom leans toward us again, and the passenger door gives a crack and swings open, and then the panel truck dips toward us as he revs its engine. "Come on. Get in. Talk about from the sticks! Come on, I got a date. Or are you guys so helpless I have to come out there and carry you up inside here and set you down yet, too?"

THE white house where we had been turning, to go five blocks out of our way, is the place Dad buys. We move in on a weekend. It's a duplex that was once a gasoline station, and another family, the Ebbingers, has been renting the other half. Dad decides to let them stay, for the rent, although they'll cramp us, but he tells them they won't be able to park their car in the bay of the double garage they've been using. Furniture of ours that won't fit in the house is piled there, and Jerome and I will be sleeping in the garage until a room for us is finished upstairs; a door leads from the garage into the kitchen. There are tall windows on two sides of the garage—for the light, Dad says, when mechanics worked on cars—and these windows look directly onto the road, beside a triangular park, and over a vacant lot behind our yard.

I go out the raised garage door, to the back yard and into the vacant lot, where weeds reach to my ears, with shadowing elms all around, and turn back; inside, Tim is bouncing up and down on the old double bed Dad has moved out of the dark room without a window at Grandma's and set up for us next to the mound of furniture.

"Well," Mom says, when I mention to her how easily I can see in, "I could hang up sheets, I guess."

But she's too busy to. Then she claims it's so filthy in the garage that anything she hangs up will be ruined. "Ask your dad to tack some paper or


ODD SPAS
LA MAISON DU POULET
Guests must consume one small boiled chicken every day, bones and all.
Cost: $7500.00 per week
FRIEDA'S REJUVENATION CENTER
2 glasses of black-cherry soda 8 times per day, plus a Milky Way just before bed.
Cost: $10,000.00 per week
THE HORIZON WORKSHOP
All the coffee and doughnuts you can eat.
Cost: $15,000.00 per week.
R. Chast

cardboard up," she says, and she tapers the end of a thread between her lips before she spears the eye of a needle.

"Where's our train, Mom?" We mean our Lionel electric train, with seven separate cars, plus a caboose.

"I was afraid you'd ask that, sooner or later."

"What do you mean?"

"It was supposed to be on that trailer we lugged behind the car all the way here. But your dad says he didn't see it when he unloaded, so we assumed it was with the other things that went ahead of us in the trucks—everything we piled in Grandpa's garage. Now that we've moved in here, we haven't found the train yet."

"Oh, no."

"Are you sure it got taken down from the top shelf of that closet in your bedroom, where we kept it stored?"

Jerome and I look at one another; we're not sure.

"Personally, I think it was left there. I can't think of everything. We've been expecting to hear from the Mitchells." This is the family living in our old house. Father Schimmelpfennig, our former parish priest in Hyatt, owns the house and rents it to the largest family in the congregation that needs it. Mom says that Father wrote and told her that the Mitchells are well moved. "So they've surely found it by now."

"Will you write and ask them?"

"If I don't hear from them soon, yes, certainly, of course I will."

THE public school in Pettibone isn't like St. Mary Margaret's—the parochial school Jerome and I attended in Hyatt. Father Schimmelpfennig ran that school, although the sisters were our teachers, and he visited often to see how the classes were going, and commented on our grades in every subject when he handed out the report cards. My third-grade class met in the same room as the fourth and fifth grades, so I was able to listen to what they were doing, and the fourth grade in Pettibone seems so far behind the third grade under Father Schimmelpfennig I figure I can sit back and sleep until my sixth year. Except in the afternoons, when our elderly teacher reads aloud each day from a book about a ranch in the West. If I close my eyes, her voice is like our mother's was when we were younger and she used to read to us each night, and then I picture our bedtime storybook, worn ragged at its edges, come rustling up toward me as though someone has lifted it close to my eyes, and see the ranks of words that I first learned to read. Then I see the railroad tracks in front of Grandpa's house in Forest Creek, and think backward through all the tracks we crossed on our way to Illinois, pulling the trailer, until I'm standing again at the depot in Hyatt, waving goodbye to Mom, off on a trip, or Grandma Jones, on her way home after a visit, and watching farm implements in the lot across the tracks appear in flashes between the passenger cars of the train, and then the implements sway like weeds with the rattle of the passing caboose. Another world.

At the edge of the school yard, under a catalpa tree—"Catalpas are like shaggy-headed bean poles," Davey has told us, "and a mess, with them there great big pods"—I wait for Jerome, and when he walks up, with his head down and a book in one hand, we start for home.

"What does your teacher talk about?" I ask.

"If you had twenty sick sheep and one died, how many would you have left?"

"Twenty-five. Why?"

"Nineteen. *Sick* sheep."

"Where'd you get that?"

"Her. She talks about a country

school she used to teach at. She doesn't say so, but I think she liked it better there."

"I know."

"I never thought I wouldn't like school."

"Me either. Almost everything we've had so far I learned in second grade at St. Mary Margaret's."

"It kind of makes you feel you can pick and choose."

"Pick and choose?"

"Whatever you want to do."

"TAKE them back," Mom says to Jerome.

"But, Mom, I just got them at the beginning of school."

"That's exactly why I say take them back. They're ruined in less than a month. They're beyond wearing anymore."

He lifts a foot and looks at one shoe, turning it from side to side, then at the other. "True," he says.

"I knew I should have come with you to pick them out."

"Why didn't you?" he asks.

This remains in the air so long that I'm in the denim-smelling store again, watching the gruff man work the laces through shiny eyelets, jerking Jerome's foot around on the stool where it rests; then the man leaning back, his thick glasses framing the bent reflections of fluorescent lights: "Well, it's these or it's those, fella. That's the best I can do for the money you got. These are guaranteed, broke-in, real-leather, long-lasting shoes."

"The sides seem thin and, well, the soles are—"

"Pouf! A kid's going to tell me about shoes? I sell them! Do they fit you or not?"

"I guess they kind of seem to."

"You guess they kinda seem to, huh? Well, I guess you kinda better take them, then, unless one of your folks is going to come by here and kinda shop around with you for a real shoe. I carry Thom McAn, tell them. Where're you boys from? I haven't seen you around. Who's your folks? Do they live in town? What's your pa do?"

Jerome's lips tighten, and, rather than answer all of this (or so it appears to me), he takes the shoes.

Now Mom turns from the back window, where she's been looking out as if watching somebody, and sits at the kitchen table, her favorite spot. She sighs as she rubs her hands over her bulging stomach. She's a hermit here; she hardly leaves the house, except for church, if then. I slip behind her and stare out; only the weedy back yard and the taller weeds of the vacant lot, like a hayfield in the night, and then cloud shadows lift from it, and it seems I'm staring at a field I've seen like this before, in North Dakota.

"You know very well I'm not in shape to," she says. "I've hardly got the gumption to get up and go."

Whose voice is this, I think as I turn around slowly, and the oiled-down look of her hair from behind is a clue: Grandma Jones.

"Tell the man you want a new pair. Tell him these are made of inferior leather, if leather at all, and the stitching's bad, or rotten, and gone kaput. There's no inner lining and the seams are coming apart on the sides. Tell him the heels are worn down to practically the soles. He can see that. Tell him the insoles buckled up and came out the first week. Tell him any or all of that—all true. Tell him I've seen you wear a pair of shoes for over a year and leave them looking new when you grew out of them, fit for your brother here, not even worn at the heels, hardly a lick. Tell him I—"

Her hair swings ahead in heavy clumps over her hands, which she lets her face fall into. "Oh, Jerome, Jerome!" she cries. "You were always so good with your shoes!"

"WHOSE are those?" the store owner says to another man after we step through the door that rings a bell; the two are leaning toward one another over a glass counter, and the other man turns.

"Beats me."

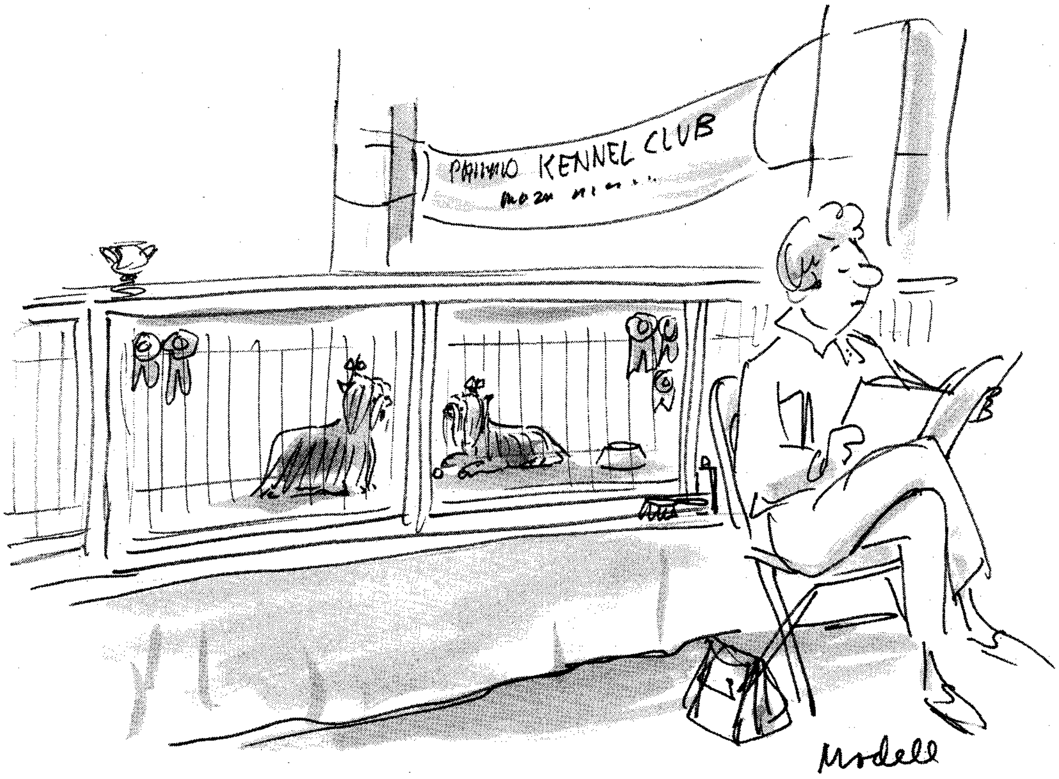
"Well!" the owner says, and claps his hands. "What can I do for you? How are those shoes?"

"That's what I came to speak to you about," Jerome says.

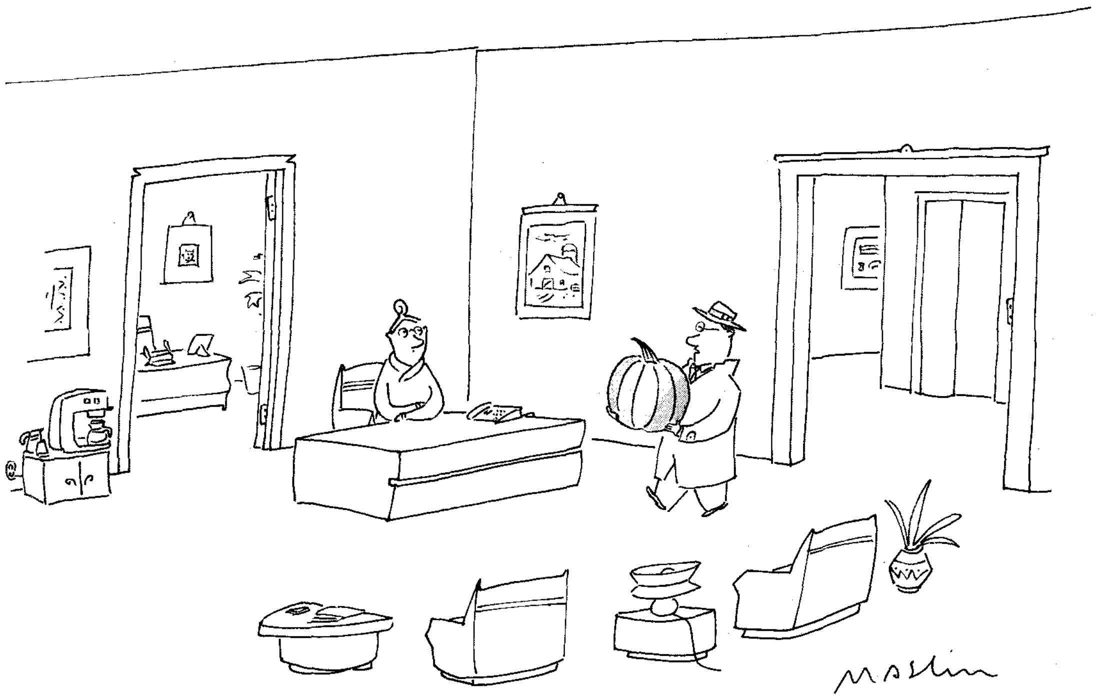
The owner turns and strikes the other man's shirtfront with his fingertips. "That's what he came to speak to me about. How do you like that? So what have you got to speak about, huh, boy?"

"I want a new pair of shoes for these you sold me."

"Well, we don't deal in trade-ins at this place or it'd be a losing proposition for me and a hell of a bargain for you—right, Dick?" He strikes the



"Didn't we meet at Madison Square Garden last year?"



"No calls for the rest of the day, Miss Bromley—I'll be carving my pumpkin."

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man's shirt again, and they both laugh.

"I'll pay you extra, maybe, for a good pair," Jerome says. "If you've got a better pair than these."

"Oh, so *now* you want the others, *now* you want the good pair, now that you've gone and stinkapated these."

"Well, just look," Jerome says, and steps in a circle in the spot where he stands, until his back is to them, then tries to look down at the shoes over his shoulder. "These heels are practically worn down to the soles. I've hardly had them—"

"Sure they are, I know they are, I can see that. I know your kind. You drag-ass your heels on the sidewalks and roads all day—I watch you go to school—and wade through mud slop ankle-deep and stomp your feet till the seams bust"—Jerome is turning, slower now, his mouth wide—"and then you drag-ass all the way home, and then your folks, or whatever, if you got any—guys at their first factory job in Pekin—come in here and wrangle with me about why the hell your shoes wear out! When it's probably the first pair you've had!"

LATE that night, out in bed, watching our frosty breath rise in the dim light from a street lamp, we hear Dad come in the front door. Something strikes the floor inside and rolls clumsily, as shoes do when they're tossed, toward the kitchen. "I'll take him up to Pekin," we hear him say. "Remind me never to shop in that store again."

"Remind you?"

Jerome rolls away and grips the pillow over his head.

"Remind you?" she says again, and a click goes through me as if a switch were thrown, sending a deeper darkness down through the cold of the garage.

"MOM, have you heard from the Mitchells yet?"

"What do you mean?"

"Didn't you write them about our train?"

"Oh. Not yet, no."

"Will you, please?"

"As soon as I get some time, yes, certainly."

JEROME and I are serving Mass, after taking turns beside Davey for a while. "I figure I'm old enough to semi-retire," Davey says. And then he glances around as if to check whether anybody is listening, and whispers, "I'm thinking I might be priest material myself, boys."

The church is tiny, with four windows of bubbly ivory glass, and there's no organ, not even a piano, which means no singing, which Mom can hardly bear. It's a mission served by a priest from Pekin, and the hours of Mass vary. Sometimes the priest is late but still has to hear confessions before the service, so he drops his hat and briefcase on a chair inside the sacristy door, throws on a purple stole, and goes into the confessional, a kind of janitor's closet across from the sacristy, while Jerome and I get into our cassocks.

There isn't a locked tabernacle, or a sanctuary light, so the Hosts and wine for each Mass, and the priest's private chalice, are in the briefcase. It's of black leather, and opens with a horsy smell that blurs the invisible line between plain bread and wine and Christ's body and blood. We're party to the mystery of this as we open the briefcase and take out the chalice with a linen cloth, careful not to touch any of its metal or its gold-lined interior, which is forbidden, since the chalice has held Christ, and lift out the paten, also untouchable, with the cloth. Then we take out the bottle of wine and pour the little bit the priest wants (he says he doesn't like wine) into one cruet, and put it on the oval glass plate beside the cruet already filled with water and lined with clinging bubbles, and place the finger towel, ironed into accordion folds, between the two. Then we peek out the side altar door to see how many people are lined up along the wall to go to confession, trying to gauge the number of communicants; or, if it's a Family Communion Sunday, which falls on the first week of every month, one of us steps out the side door to the altar rail, as Davey has instructed us to, and says, "Will all those who plan to attend Holy Communion today please raise their right hand?"

The shame and discomfort we feel isn't from standing in front of the congregation, or from seeing the looks of those who don't raise their hands, but from our role in this awful informality, after Hyatt, where dozens of altar boys and hundreds of parishioners and a choir were orchestrated by Father Schimmelpfennig—and from seeing how Mom bows her head to hide her humiliation. She studied five years with Father Schimmelpfennig before becoming a convert, and says that he's the most intelligent man she knows.

Back in the sacristy, we take a miniature hardboard box from the briefcase, containing the Hosts, white wafers, packed in tissue paper like coins, and count out on the paten enough to match the raised hands, and then add five more, in case some people haven't arrived, or others change their minds. Once the Hosts are consecrated, the priest has to eat any extras, since Christ can't be left lying around, and the priest doesn't like the dryness of them. He hurries through the Mass, and we kneel so close behind him on the low steps, in the cramped space, that I can see his anklets under the alb and his hairy legs above them. No mystery. No music, no High Mass, no Benediction; no scattering of myrrh and grains of spice from the incense boat over burning charcoal in the censer; no ceremony like the daily ceremonies in Father Schimmelpfennig's church.

One Sunday I hold my thumb over an open bottle of wine and shake it, sending the wine skating into sparkling explosions inside, and whisper, "I wonder what this tastes like."

Jerome gives me a sour look. "You better keep wondering."

I put the bottle to my mouth and tip it up but stick my tongue into its neck.

"Hey!" he cries, and then covers his mouth as if to stuff the word back; people in the pews outside have probably heard.

There's a circle of burning on my tongue where the wine has touched, and I feel my blood rushing there.

Jerome grabs my surplice and whispers, "What if Father has poured some back? If there's even a drop in there, it's all consecrated."

"He wouldn't pour it back in here from the chalice. Anything in the cruet isn't consecrated." I'm almost sure this is correct.

"It's still a sin. Get out there and confess it to Father."

"I can't. Everybody will wonder what I did."

"That's not the point. Father expects you to receive Communion."

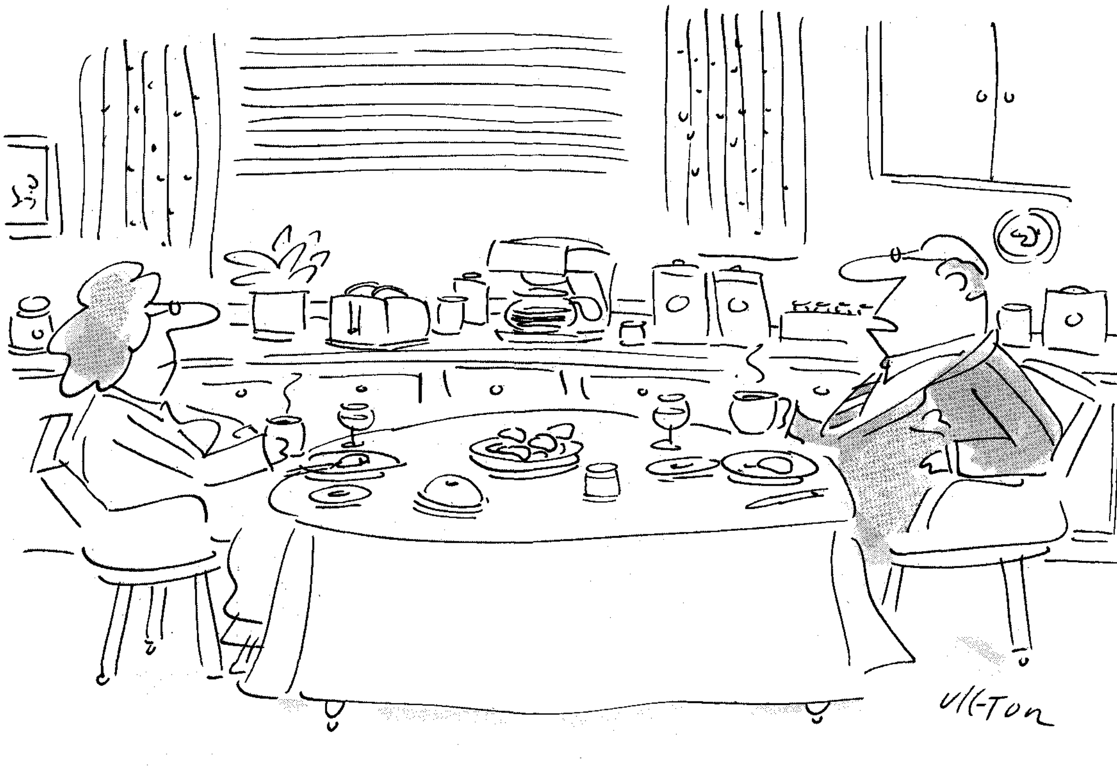
"I can't!"

"What are you going to do when he holds out the Host—shake your head?" Somebody once complained when Davey did exactly this, and then Jerome and I tried to figure out what it was that Davey had been doing in here. What I meant was I couldn't confess this to Father, and let him know that I'd betrayed him—forced my way past his trust to those elements that only a priest is supposed to minister. "You better," Jerome whispers. "Because it's the worst kind of sacrilege there is."

When Father holds out the Host, I shake my head, and later I can't confess the sin, either, although the possibility of piling sacrilege upon sacrilege sends sweat crawling through my hair as Jerome and I lie under our covers in the garage at night. I decide it isn't as bad as Jerome claims, but it bothers me to imagine a sister at St. Mary Margaret's telling a story about an altar boy who has sampled the priest's Communion wine. I don't confess it, but when Dad reminds me of how long it has been since my last Communion I take the Host again, as Jerome and I serve on a Family Communion Sunday, and I see Jerome look over at me as we bow our foreheads to the sandy carpet. I can feel the Host resting over the vinegary circle left by the wine, as if the aftertaste of it remained on my tongue, and then saliva gathers there in a rush and covers the spot.

Afterward, out in the small churchyard enclosed with mossy cement blocks, Jerome says, "I hope you finally confessed what you did that other Sunday. Otherwise, you better be ready to say a perfect Act of Contrition. And what if you aren't prepared and something happens instantly"—his blond eyebrows rise up—"what then?"

Then the chastening of the rest of the day, at home, where even the sunlight looks different, burning around faults I haven't noticed before—a board lifting up from the others in the living room, a crack in that off-color wall—as we lie in sleepy postures on the floor and furniture, with the Sunday paper starting its drift and spread, spilling out colored funnies about characters different from the ones we saw in North Dakota, except for the man I keep zeroing in on in my hope of becoming a similar, square-chinned savior: Rex Morgan, M.D. I'll be in a crowd somewhere, maybe at a boxing match, maybe one



"It's breakfast. Assume nothing."

where my real-life hero, Joe Louis, is re-defending his title, and he'll get cut, or knock somebody out, and a man will step to the microphone and say, "Is there a doctor in the house?"

I'M waiting under the catalpa for Jerome when a siren starts up in sweeping wails that go through me like water through a screen. Students come running past, and when Jerome shoves through the doors with their polished hit rails across the glass, his reflection slides away as if he's parting. We've only gone a few steps together when we see smoke rising from somewhere down the street, in the direction of our house. We start into a run, passing students who get older the farther we go, and somebody behind us says, "Is that their place?"

"You laughed in all the wrong places."

And now I see a fire engine in the street beside our house and a man hopping down from the engine with a hose, and as we pick up speed and the house swings into place on its corner among the elms, smoke appears, rolling over its roof from behind, and my breath, which is coming hard, stops: a silence, then a sound from its center like a stump being struck—my heart. It's as if all the matches I've lit illicitly have finally set something on fire. From the crossroads I can see firemen behind our house, beyond the service-station driveway, which we're now past. We run up to the idling fire engine and leap back when a chrome pump on its bumper kicks in with a groan.

The grass of the vacant lot is on fire, and flames shimmying in their own heat rise over one another across the lot in backbends toward the elms. A black char is creeping under our clothesline. The water from the hose hits there first, and smoke plunges up with a rumpling sound. The hose coughs and bucks in the hands of two men, then there's a blast of air and spray, and, in the kickback, water rattles off the windows of the garage. I can see the mound of furniture in wavering lines through the panes, then our bed. I notice a crowd of people at the crossroads now, and another crowd in the triangular park, and start for the garage, about to get down in shame and crawl. Because everything I do or say turns out wrong and has an awful effect later—I know that now. I have to go to confession, and then ask Mom and Dad to help me get this to stop.

There's a thundering sound. The firemen are dousing one of the silver-painted oil tanks that feed the floor furnaces in the house's two living rooms—the nearer tank, ours—and in the window beside the tank Mom's face, firm-set and white, appears, staring out at the back yard as she was staring at it the other day. No, she's staring at us.

We go up the drive and lift the garage door, but only a little, with so many people watching, and Jerome slips down and crawls sideways under it into the garage; then I do, sure that I see black tadpoles of soot floating down over our belongings. He slides the door closed from the inside, in the sudden coolness where we stand. Furniture and piles of boxes everywhere I go, and houses being torn apart or fixed up. We go around our belongings to the kitchen door.

Mom is at the window, still staring out, and the sight of her like this, in her smock, with her stomach big beneath, sends a weighty trembling through my tongue where the circle of wine once was, and I have to swallow hard in order to talk. "Mom, are you all right?"

She turns to us in the slowed heaviness of her time, her eyes swollen, her lashes drooping in clinging points. "So," she says, in her voice of a bad cold. "So, the culprits return."

"We got home as fast as we could."

"You mean to tell me you weren't smoking out there?"

"Mom, we were in school!"

"Didn't I see you both out there as plain as life just now? Oh! Trying to get this damnable phone to work, and then having to run out and grab the clothes off the line, screaming and yelling my fool head off for you, with those big damn oil tanks about to blow!"

Jerome and I look at each other, then at her, and she puts her wrists on her hips, her hands dangling, her face blotched with color, and leans over her stomach and wags her head as she says, "Always that smoking, smoking behind my back! You think I don't smell it on you? You think I didn't smell it at your grandparents', where I couldn't discipline you? This place could have burned up with me in it!"

"But, Mom, look at the time. We couldn't be back from school till now."

"I don't need any more of your back talk, and I don't want to hear of either of you smoking again, you Smokey Stovers, you! Now straighten up the mess in this house, and then sweep it up, every single room of it! And then get to bed, both of you! I don't care if it is five o'clock and you haven't had your supper yet. Get to bed!"

GOODBYE, GÖTEBORG

The countries we depart will manage without us.
The Swedes will rise tomorrow, brush their teeth,
and go about their businesses. Beneath
the hiss of the street-sweeper's rotary brush
the footstep-peppered cobbles will resume
their ancient shine; the citizens will seethe
at the dinging crosswalks and ruthlessly keep
appointments made before our small hiatus.

We meant nothing. We were less to Sweden
than a scratch on crystal; their lovely English
was a pose, a veneer applied by television.
Like the thin ice of their eyes, it will be broken.
Behind our backs, all over Europe, men
are picking up and carrying their languages,
barbaric fossils, in their mouths. It is
as if they relish our oblivion.

—John Updike

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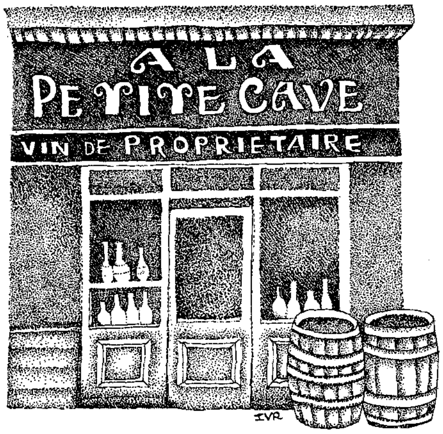
JEROME and I tape up newspaper, as high as we can reach, over the garage windows. At least we have more space than the rest of the family. An enclosure like a closet in the living room (an office for the service station, Dad thinks) is the girls' and Tim's bedroom, although Susan usually sleeps with Mom and Dad, in the room their double bed nearly fills, just inside the front door. The front-door window is fitted with venetian blinds, left by the family before us, and we have to be careful opening the door, so that its knob doesn't hit the wall and set the blinds clashing, a sound Mom can't stand.

Fall comes so cold that Dad says at the supper table, "It's worse than North Dakota," and everybody stares down. On a Wednesday night Jerome and I take the old wooden radio out to the garage, so we won't bother Mom, and as he twists the pointed plastic knob (like the inside of a cathedral arch, as I saw it when I was younger) and the yellow-gold dial comes on, I'm back beside the bookshelves in our house in Hyatt, where the radio used to sit, and, to savor this sensation, I turn off the garage lights and narrow in on the glow of its dial. There are scratches of music, whines and beeps, and then Jerome finds the right station. We've been looking forward to this night for weeks: Joe Louis is coming out of retirement to defend his title as the undefeated heavyweight champion of the world.

Jerome lies back on our bed in the dim light, and I sit on a milk crate, with the cold from the concrete rising through my shoes, and wiggle at a loose back tooth that's almost out—barely held at one side by a raw hinge of my gum. I've gotten into arguments in school because I keep insisting Joe Louis is going to win; he's impossible to beat, I've said. So when it becomes clear that he isn't the fighter he once was, and he starts bleeding from the face, according to the screaming announcer, the dark garage floor falls away, then reappears as if drawn back on the lines of my dropping tears. And when he goes into the ropes, to a roar from the radio, I see him go down and feel he's pulled the sky along, like a tablecloth grabbed going down, and in the dislocation I admire even more the power he wielded as a champion, which has carried him through these rounds, although I know an end has come to the time when he was the center of my hope and affection. He loses.

Jerome flips on the light, and in its flat glaze I realize that the winner, Ezzard Charles, shares my name, and I picture Joe Louis walking up the steps of our snowy porch in Hyatt and pounding on the door with a boxing mitt, freezing in his trunks, streamers of snow from the roof coiling past his shoulders and his oiled skin, and calling for me and getting no answer, the house broken down and deserted, nobody home. Then I see I'm holding a bloody tooth in my hand, its cratered roots yellow-brown, and rather than say anything to Jerome or put it under my pillow for maybe a quarter, I throw it across the garage.



When we go inside, to dress for bed in the privacy of the house, Mom asks, "What's the matter?"

"Joe Louis got beat," I say. Lately I've been our spokesman.

"Is it that bad?"

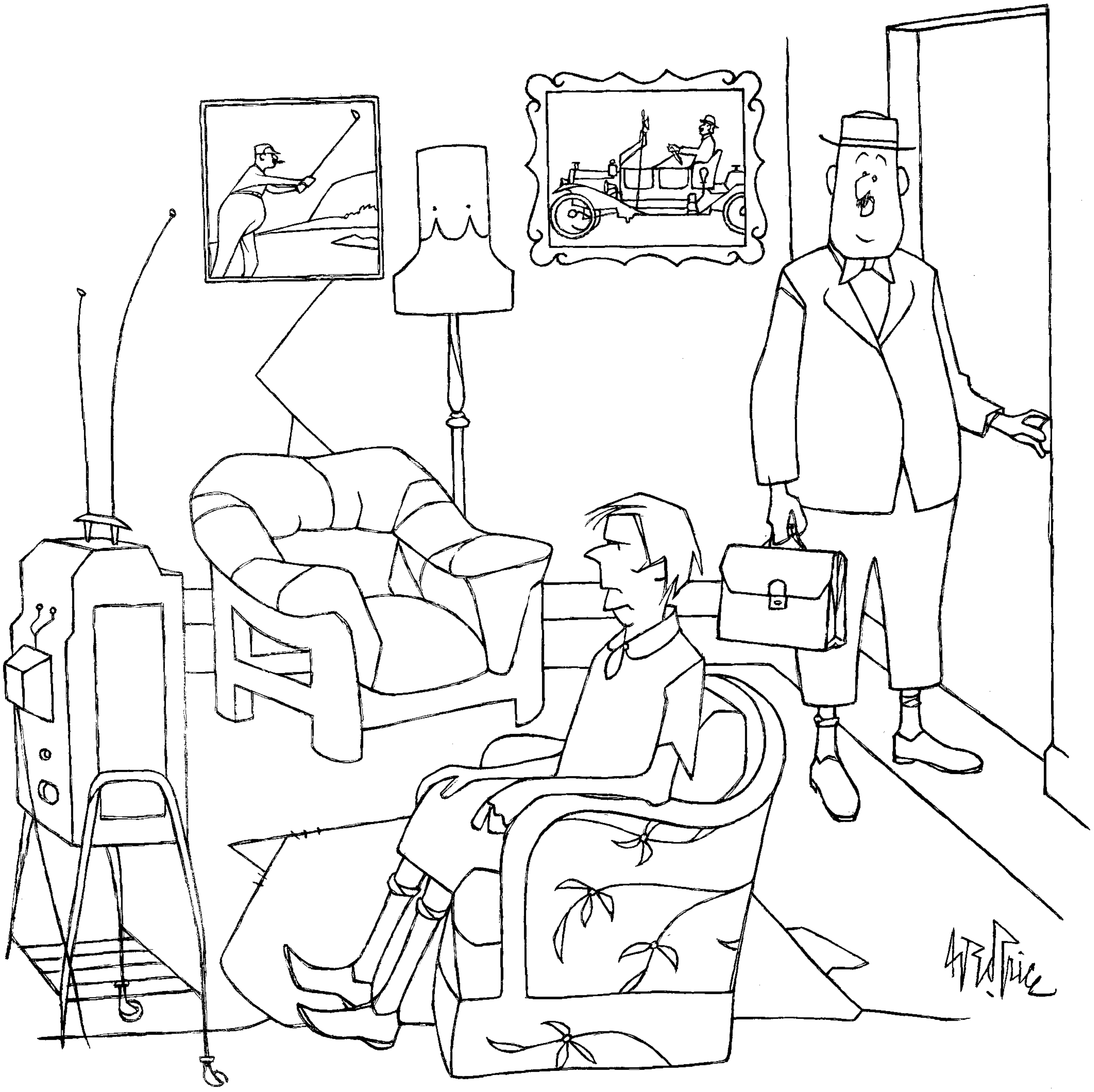
"Yes."

"You look like you've lost your best friend." She goes down on her haunches, and her eyes, troubled and nervous, travel over our faces to see whether we're withholding anything, or trying to mislead her. She takes me by a wrist. "Tell me. It's not something else? Something you're afraid—Something you don't want your mother to know about?"

And with this I understand that it's our mother who's afraid.

IT gets so cold in the garage that Dad moves our bed into the kitchen, temporarily, before it's moved to the basement, after a better set of stairs is built down there. But when Mom sees the oil and grease caked on the basement floor, she says, "No, it's too filthy a place to sleep. It's too filthy to have it tracked upstairs. And anyway, I'd never be able to sleep at night with that floor furnace hanging down like it does above their heads."

So the swing-down steps in the ceiling of the hallway to the bathroom are removed, and a new set of stairs to the attic started at the end of the hall,



"I'll be out in the great world, wearing many hats."

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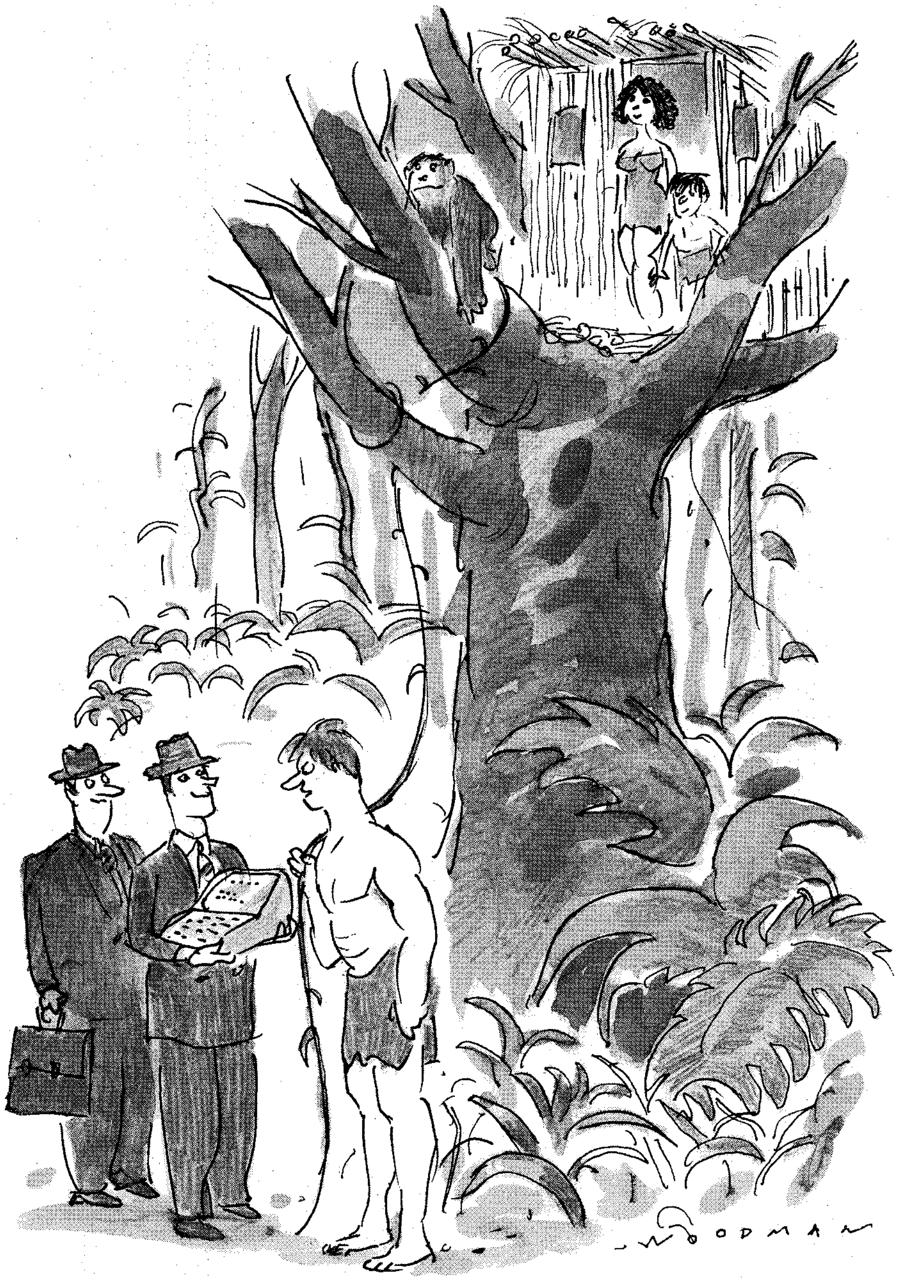
turning right to climb above the basement stairs beneath, and one cold Saturday Jerome and I are nailing down temporary treads on the risers, while Dad tacks up black-covered insulation to the underside of the same risers, directly below us. There's a half-finished room upstairs, partly covered with Sheetrock that has turned a rusty brown and comes crumbling out of its sheath of paper if you bump it. A storeroom? Jerome and I sweep off its walls, caught up in a havoc of sneezing, and then sweep the sootlike dust out of it, between ceiling joists. A path of planks leads to the stairs, and a single bulb on an extension cord hangs above the landing. Dad moves our bed up, plus a cot that Tim is supposed to use but doesn't; he sneaks into Mom and Dad's bed. I appropriate the cot, because I can't stand sleeping with Jerome anymore; I can't stand touching anybody, or anybody touching me, for fear they'll become involved in whatever it is that I'm doing wrong.

Dad also brings up an electric heater and hooks it to the extension cord. Its copper-colored dish reflector glows orange from coils wrapped around its central core, and reminds me that, beyond the windowless walls of our room, there's a sun. It reminds me of *her*.

"MOM, did you hear from the Mitchells about our train yet?"

"I haven't even written to them. Forgive me, boys."

AS Dad tacks up the black-covered insulation beneath us, pushing its woolly fibre glass between the risers and dodging from the dust and cor-



"Tarzan no want computer."

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ruption our banging hammers send down, Susan keeps crying from the living room. Dad's lips, lined with tacks, compress, and then he goes at it with new energy, breathing harder, his eyes rolling to stare at me or Jerome, and I realize I've hardly seen him lately. Then he steps down from the red-painted kitchen stool, which is standing on a plank that spans the stairwell from the floor to a stepladder's top, and his heavy strides go through the kitchen to the living room.

"Isn't there anything you can do for her?" we hear him ask.

"I've done everything I know how to. She'll have to cry it out."

"The poor thing sounds like she's being tortured."

"Not by me. Maybe all that banging away bothers her."

"Well, isn't there something you can do?"

"There comes a time when you've done everything you can, dear, as you well know."

"Is it my fault they reneged on their promise of the job?"

Jerome and I sit on the last tread we've nailed in place. The principal's position that Dad was supposed to have when we moved to Illinois didn't come through; he can't find another teaching job; he's working for Grandpa Neumiller.

"I didn't intend to be ironic," she says. "You're dear to me, you know that. You've done all you can."

"It doesn't help when I don't know if you'll finish up what you say you will, so that sometimes there's that, too."

"My hands are full. They feel tied."

"I'm only trying to say that that's partly why things are going so slow." Then a new tone. "I'm sorry I don't have that clothes hamper done, or the washstand you asked for. I simply haven't had time."

"That would help. I have to put the tubs on chairs out there."

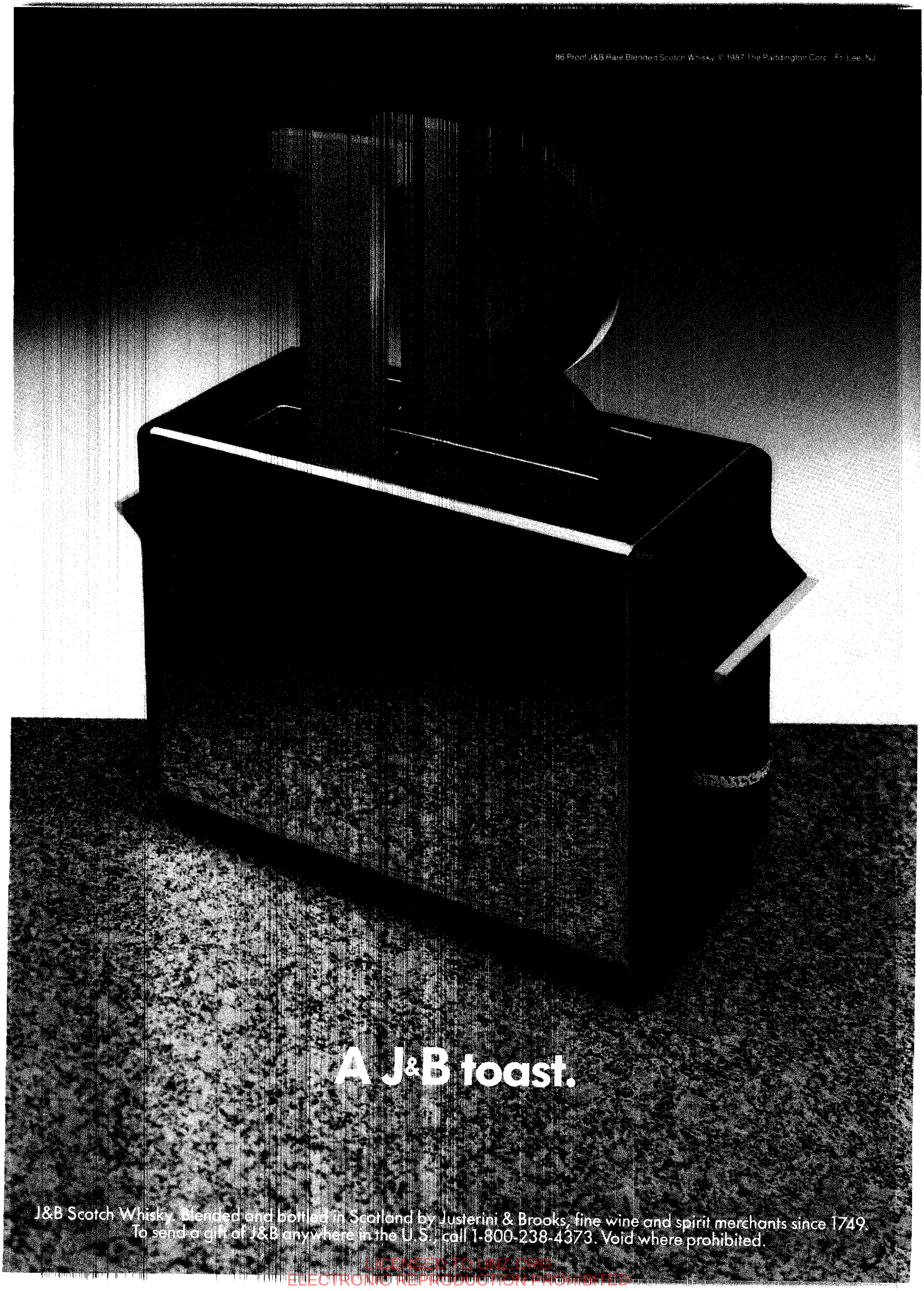
She means in the garage, where we used to sleep. Jerome and I study one another and miss part of what they're saying. Dad goes on, "Also, it's an entire house to fix up by myself." Jerome bows his head and takes it in his hands. "The reason there's no order—I didn't get the job. I feel I've failed you in that. And I have to keep up with the job I have, putting in as much overtime as I can, if we want money to redo this place. It's bone-wearying work and a job I don't like."

"I know, dear. I think of you every day at it. I don't know how you keep it up. I'm bone-weary, too."

DAD nails a board with coat hooks on it near the bottom of the new stairs to the attic, and Mom writes a name above each hook, and says, "In this single thing, please obey. Hang your coats and jackets here, instead of scattering them through every room of the house."

We plan to do as she says, but after a week we start to forget, and one afternoon she turns in the middle of the living room, where a coat is lying at her feet, and says, "Everything I do has the opposite effect. I used to keep up, and now I can hardly keep out from under. One more mess, I feel, is too much." She stares around the room with shining eyes. "It's times like this when I want to quit for good!"

THE Ebbingers still rent the other half of our house, and Mrs. Ebbinger begins to visit in the afternoons—or the afternoons are when Jerome and I walk in and find her at the kitchen table with Mom, in sunlight from the window where Mom once looked out at the flames, which still seem partly there. Coffee is on the table, and their heads are together like cobblers finishing a slipper in a



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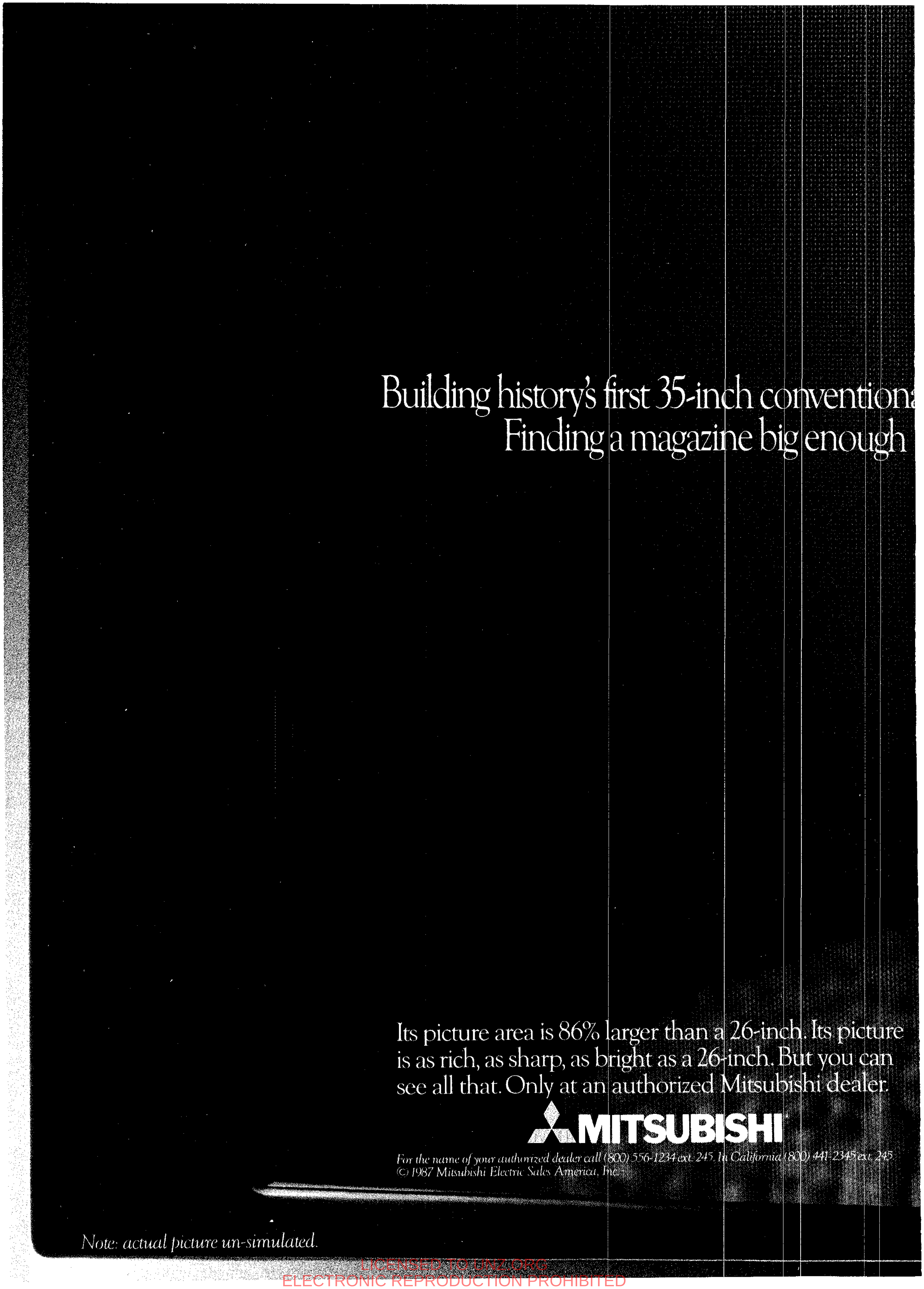

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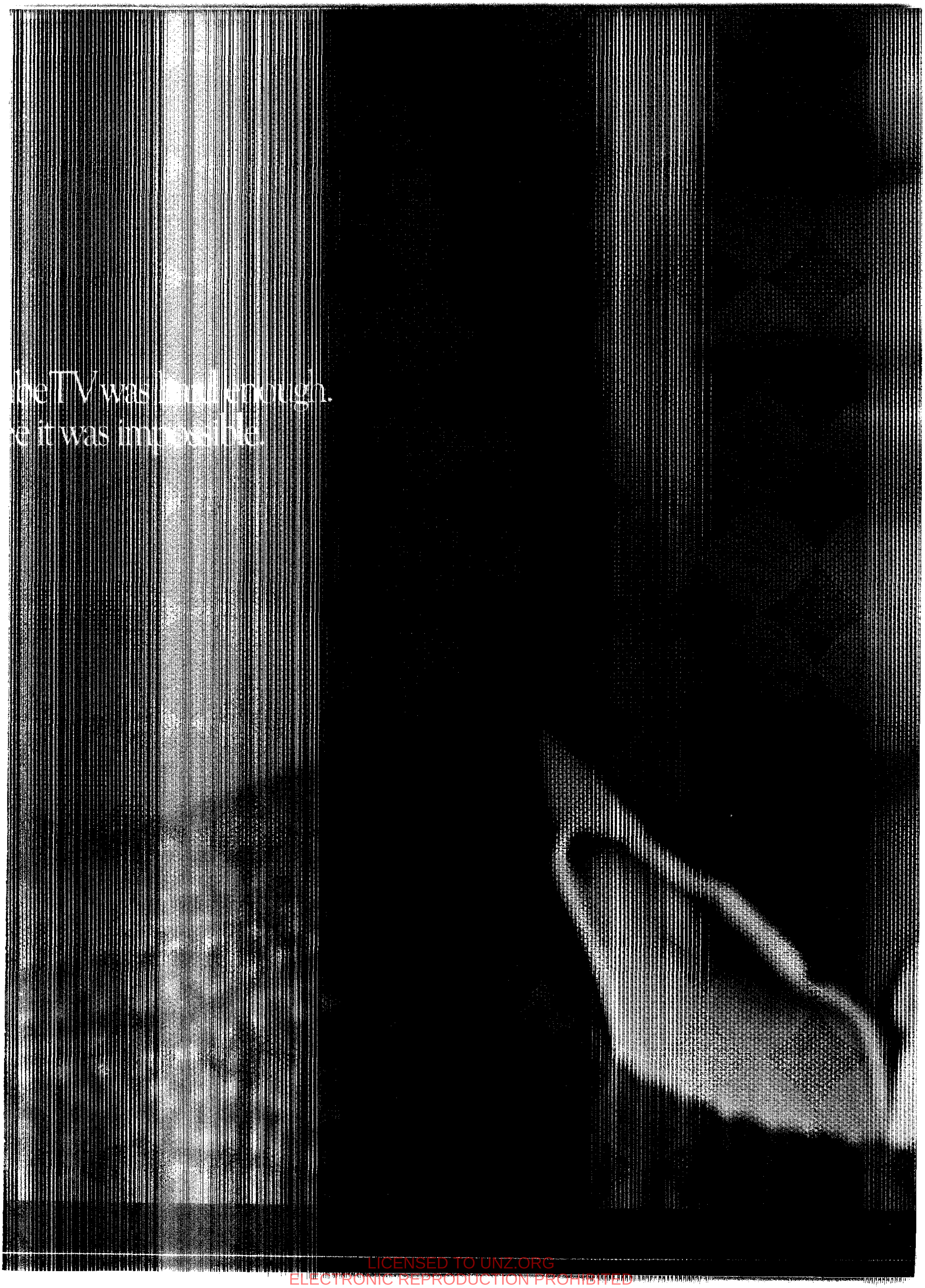
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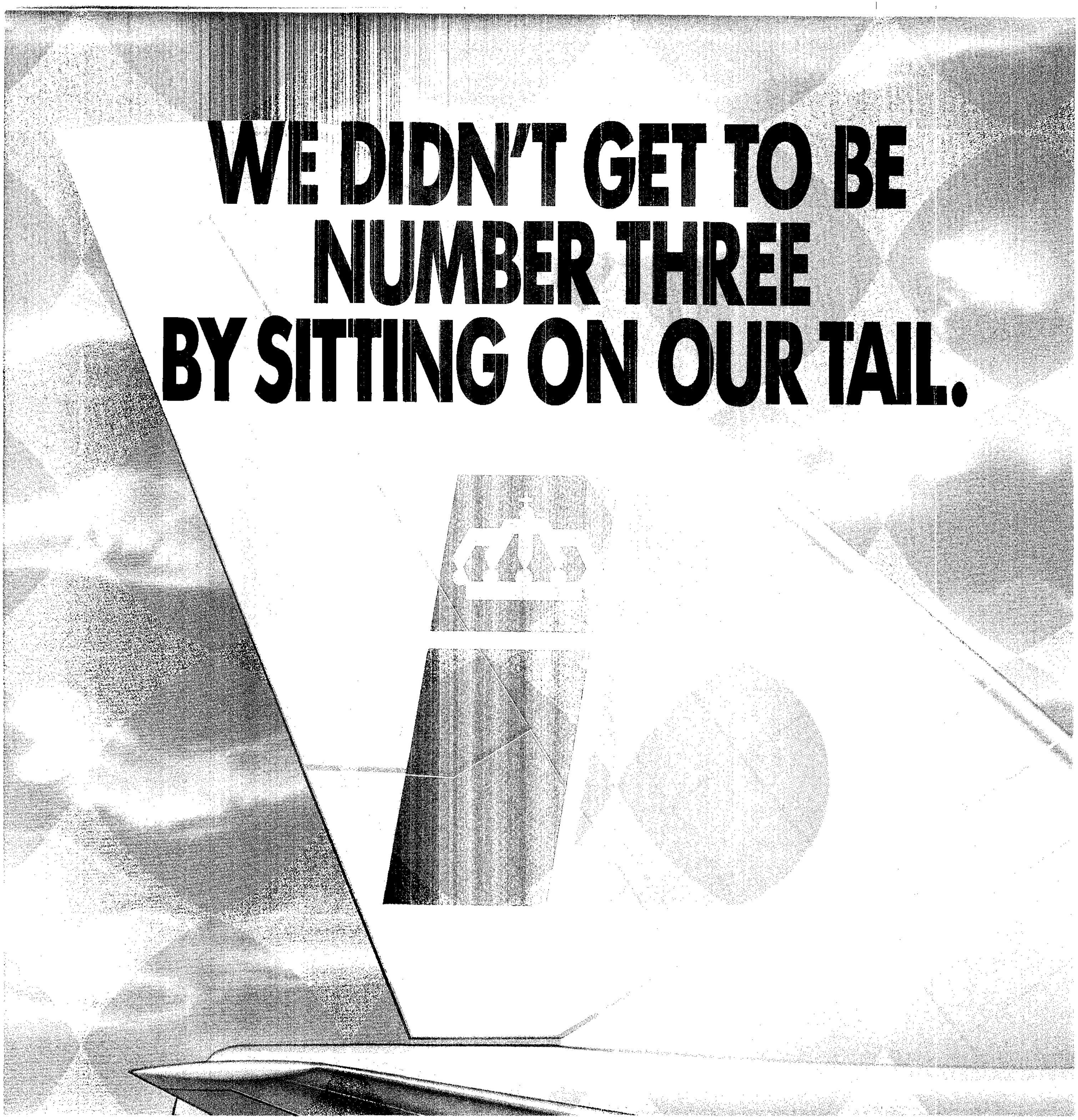

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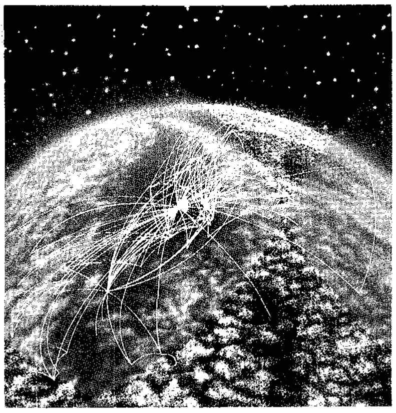

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rush. They stop talking when we come in or, if we stay in the living room, speak so quietly we're never quite sure what they're saying—though Mom sometimes smiles so that her pearl-gray tooth, outlined in gold, appears, or her head goes back and her throat broadens with her sudden laugh. Often there's the look of a confession taking place, and one afternoon Mom says, "I thank you for your suggestion, Bobby. It could prove to be the best diversion for older children a pregnant mother ever had."

The movies. We've been given the freedom to go to them. A schedule printed on colored poster paper arrives in the mail once a month, listing the movies for Monday-Tuesday, Wednesday-Thursday, and the weekend, and we get to circle two features each week we want to see, as long as both don't fall on school nights. On those evenings Mom hands us twenty cents apiece from a sugar bowl in the cupboard, where the colored poster with our circles is tacked to a door. The movies are our reward for helping in the house, Mom says, although we don't always help, and Mrs. Ebbinger is always connected in my imagination with our breathless preparations to leave for the Delta.

She has long black hair and is thinner than I am, although she has two young boys, and her small mouth is always pouting open, while her eyes, moist and brown, slide in a sympathetic, movie-actress way that stirs me most at night on my cot. She keeps moving her cup and spoon or the cream and sugar around the table while they talk, as if advancing in a pattern more complicated than cribbage. The coffeepot on the table is often hers. Mom has never had a friend in the house, and their conversations look so personal that I'm always surprised to hear them talk about the younger children, which is their usual subject; although Mrs. Ebbinger once said, "If you're not getting any more out of it than that, Alpha, why keep it up?"

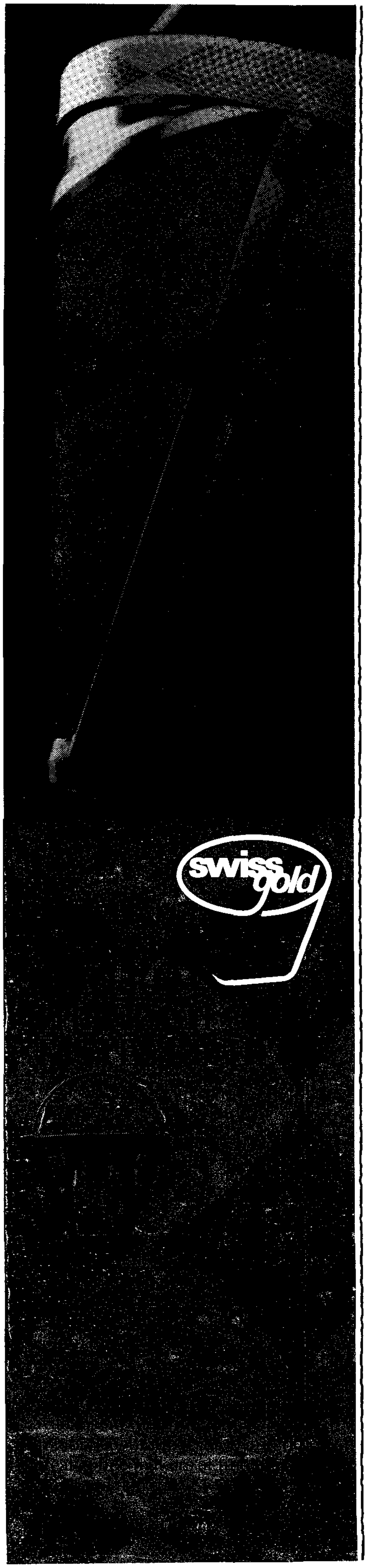
And one night as I came down the new stairs, barefoot, on my way to the bathroom, I heard Mom say, "Yes, Martin, we do indeed have our coffee every day." I wanted to see her; her voice sounded different. "And I usually manage to have the time to make it, though she sometimes brings her own. Coffee's about all I enjoy nowadays. It runs through me like a sieve and keeps me going. I'm sorry I'm such a miserable failure to you as a wife."

"Alpha, please. You just said you never feel you have time anymore. I was thinking of you."

At the Delta we slide down in the mildew-smelling seats, with fuzzy velvet arms worn to oily smoothness at their ends, in order to render ourselves even smaller in relation to the giant figures who glide across the screen, looming close in vibrating color, and who turn to us as if to speak the word we've been waiting to hear, although when they do speak from those lips that we could lie across, I can hardly hear them, I'm so filled with taking them in—more so in the features than in the cartoons, which are like jiggling cutouts of a violence that isn't very funny, and isn't real, although none of the features have anything to do with what we know, either (we whisper about this during our walks home through the towering dark which—after the Technicolor characters of the movies—causes us to feel stunted), since none of the people do the everyday things that normal people do, or even suggest they have to take a pee. So I begin to look beyond the actors to the scenery, particularly when a Western is playing, and learn to see there, in the colors of a hillside or a coulee, wedges of the countryside whose border we've crossed, and I feel my emotions pour out so strongly they appear to brighten the screen and open up tunnels to that country itself, blue above green.

• •

WE carry home our report cards on the first day of Thanksgiving vacation. Mom is at the table, with Susan in her lap, facing away from the window, and their four hands travel over the tabletop, where sewing materials are spread. Mom is finishing a set of curtains for the window behind



her. Its roller shade is all the way up, and late-fall sunlight—like the last of summer to be burned away before winter begins—is reflected everywhere in the room off new snow, in a powdery gold light that looks like pollen drifting through the house. Figurines on the center sash across the window, one in the shape of a swan, are silvery-black against this light.

Susan is usually restless when we're around, but now she hardly stirs, except to tap at the report cards we put down. Mom picks them up, one by one, beginning with Tim's, and draws them out of the envelopes, then tilts them in the light as if to catch the smallest notation. She sets them down, puts a hand to her forehead, and leans an elbow on the sheet of light the table has become, and I can smell her hair, freshly washed, as if it were spread through my insides.

"I hardly know what to say. These are nearly perfect, all of them. What a gift—" Her head turns on her hand; she's shaking it.

"But it's so simple—so easy here in this school, Mom."

"Yes, and I know how you dislike that. So these mean even more to me." She looks up and blinks at the light. "You've done this without any encouragement from me. What you receive at home usually governs your school grades. You could have rebelled, or been angry, or given up. Even your deportment is good, except for your daydreaming, as your teacher calls it, Charles. Your dad will be so pleased.

"And Tim, look at you, you who never even went to St. Mary Margaret's, and had to start out here in public school—I haven't been much help to you, either. Your grades are as good as theirs." She places a gold hand over his hair standing up in gold spines. "You've reaffirmed my faith in the Lord, which hasn't been very apparent, lately, I'm afraid. Forgive me. Give thanks for your grades. Pray that I can pull out of whatever this is and be the mother I was. You've blessed me in ways I never expected. Here I am, moved."

SHE isn't feeling well. Jerome and I, at the front door, hear Dad say in their bedroom, "You aren't going again this Sunday?"

"I believe I have a valid enough excuse." Her voice, muffled by covers or a pillow, has the open deepness it does when she's crying.

"Well, of course," he whispers. "You're months along."

"One of your sisters-in-law called me 'Fatty' last Sunday, as in 'Fatty, Fatty, two-by-four.' "

"Who?"

"As if the condition I'm in has to do with diet, or what I eat or don't, or how I exercise, or anything of the sort."

"I know who it was."

"Does it make any difference? Pray for me. I need it."

There's a movement from the bed and I picture her dying and asking for me, because I'm the only doctor who can save her, so I talk to her in a whisper others can hardly hear, or lie beside her in the way I know almost everything about and hold her hand and do all the rest, the gold window a mirror above these champions of the world, and then Dad comes out and notices us at the door, and through Dad I see our shining gabardine coats, Jerome's a grapy purple and mine bright green, with furry collars and short belts that clip with hooks at our waists like aviators'—the reason we begged Dad to buy them. He draws deeper into the collar of his sheepskin coat, shaking his head in the slow way he used to shake it when he'd come home from school at Hyatt and find us fighting over our toys, and then he reaches for the doorknob and we step behind him, and I can almost hear the blizzard that must be rising in North Dakota to bring on this sudden cold.

JEROME and I are sitting over the floor furnace, side by side, our backs against the wall—shifting on the metal grillwork to keep it from frying our butts like waffles. Dad is installing a central furnace, and Jerome and I have been gluing asbestos strips around the joints of the hot-air ducts, but everything has come to a standstill; mold is growing in a paste pot in the basement. The only sound is the sound of the floor furnace forcing hot air between our legs, drying our eyes so it's hard to blink, and the steady clack of needles from the couch, where Grandma knits.

It was dark, as always, in our attic room when Dad came a few steps up the stairs two weeks ago and called to us. From the doorway I could see his hands grip the floor below the board rail he'd added around our stairwell, and his face, in the watery, half-blocked light from the bulb on the extension cord, appeared to float on a blackness endlessly steep—so that I

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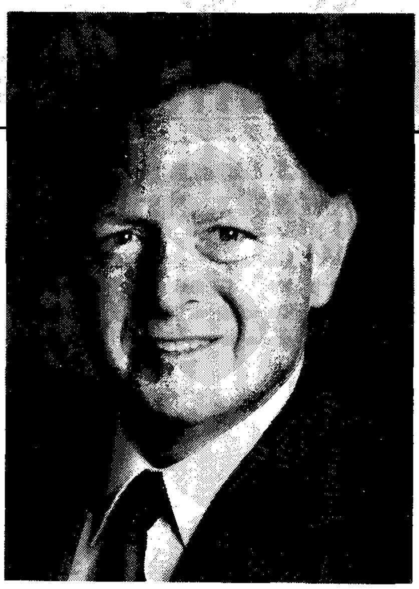

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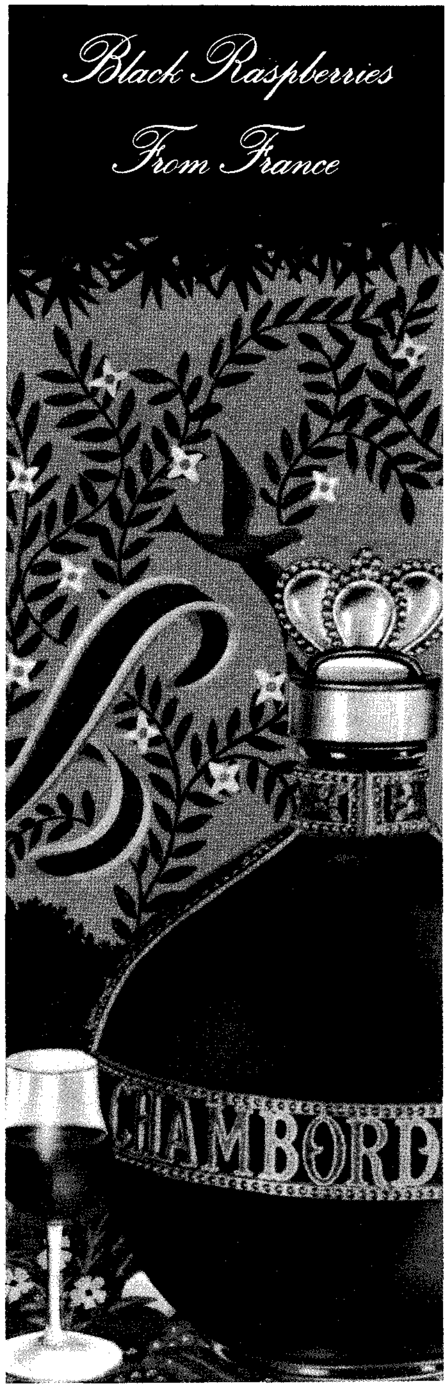

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held to every line of him: the yellowy vessels in his large eyes with their hooded lids, tangled eyebrows rising above his glasses, his upper lip outlined like a woman's, brown in his bloodless face. He raised a hand, and then came up on the plank path to our door and touched us as he said, "I'm afraid I have bad news."

Mom is dead, I thought—because when Dad woke us that morning he told us she'd been taken to the hospital.

"These things happen, and we have to pray it's the Lord's will. The baby died. You would have had a sister. She was baptized right away. We named her Dacey. It's terrible." He took our hands into his, and in that warmth, with his fingers curling around, glimpses of anatomy unfolded in me and I wished I'd never pounded away at myself on the cot.

"That isn't what's bothering me the most. Your mother hasn't been well, as you know. Now the doctors say her condition is serious. Pray for her, please."

He turned to leave, then turned back. "Let's not tell the rest of the children for now, O.K.? We'll say she's away for a while. I felt you two were old enough to know." He started down the stairs, then stopped on the landing and turned to us, with the light bulb behind shining around the darkness over his face. "Or we'll tell the younger ones she's in the hospital, no more. Your Aunt Rose Marie will take the girls to her house until things are more settled, and Grandma will be here tomorrow when you get home from school. I'll be at the hospital as much as I can."

I heard hammering in the garage the next day and went to the kitchen door and eased its new curtain back. Dad had nailed together the frame of a large box, and now he was sawing across a piece of Masonite whose surface was stamped and painted to look like yellow kitchen tiles. He took the piece and covered one end of the frame, pounding it in place with tacks from his mouth, and I felt as if a pair of hands pulled from ice water had been put to my neck. He was building a coffin. For the baby, I thought, and started to gag—that we were so poor he had to do this, that a baby would be buried in it—and looked around for Jerome, my knees so feeble I couldn't leave the window. Dad worked fast covering the four long sides and then set the box up on end, with its top still open, his panting billowing in the freezing air as he stepped back to study it, and then he grabbed up clothes heaped on the floor and started stuffing them in. Her clothes hamper. I gagged again. He picked up a two-by-four, measured it, and was sawing away in a rush: the washstand.

THEN Jerome and I step into the cold vestibule of the church on Saturday, after our weekly instructions for Confirmation, and see our Uncle Tom standing inside the double doors, clenching and unclenching his fists. He and other uncles have come to the house to plaster its walls, so that something visible will be finished when Mom returns. Tom shuffles his weight, uneasy, and smiles the tight smile that sends dimples into his cheeks, unshaven now. He waits until the half-dozen others have filed out, and then he's at our height, on his haunches. There are bits of plaster in his hair and eyebrows. He starts to reach for us and then laces his fingers over a knee.

"Well!" he says, and his smile trembles. "I suppose you're wondering why I'm here! Your dad says to tell you your ma's been taken to another hospital, a better one, in Peoria. Your dad's there now, and he's called your Grandma Jones. She'll be here tomorrow. Your house is in worse shape yet, so I'm driving you to Grandma and Grandpa's for the rest of today. They have games there, you know, that—"

He stands, and the movement throws moisture from his eyes in spots onto the floor. He pushes both double doors wide, and we step under his arms into winter sunlight. "Well!" he says, and slams his hands against his sides as if searching for gloves, the doors still open, then shoves both hands so deep into his jacket pockets that the corners of the jacket stand out in points. I see a fine rain of sugar snow ticking over curling leaves as far out as I'm able to look, to the mossy cement blocks that enclose the churchyard, where beads of the snow are ricocheting and flying straight up, and hear the ticking grow to a whir like a passing of the years I've spent with Jerome.

"Well!" Tom says again. "Isn't this a fine how-do-you-do!"

I raise my eyes enough to see the blacktop, white, while the sound of snow on the leaves insists that this piecemeal world of white will always remain with me, following after these words of his, to the end of my history, and then I taste the circle like rust on

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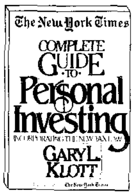
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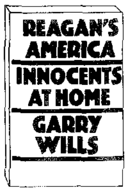
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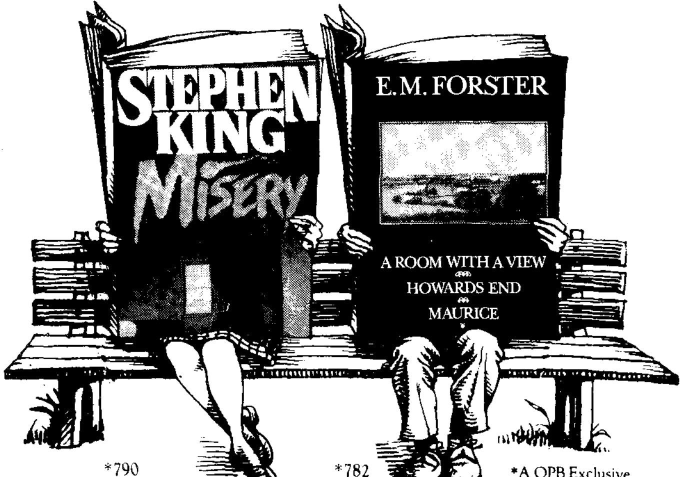
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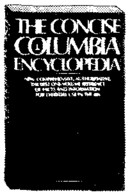
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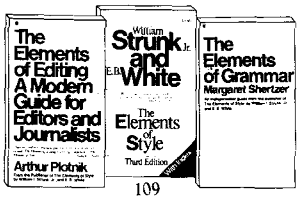
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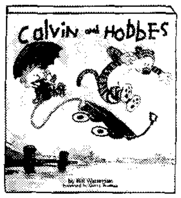
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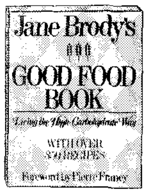
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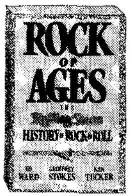
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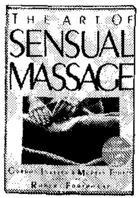
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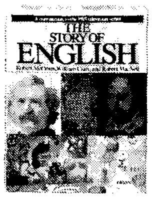
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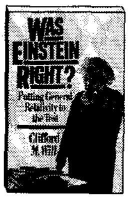
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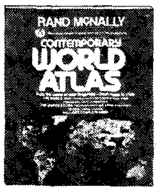
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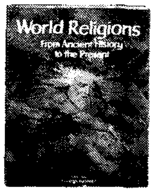
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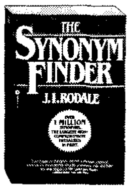
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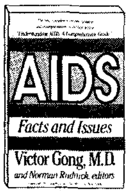
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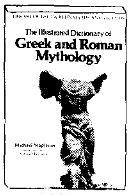
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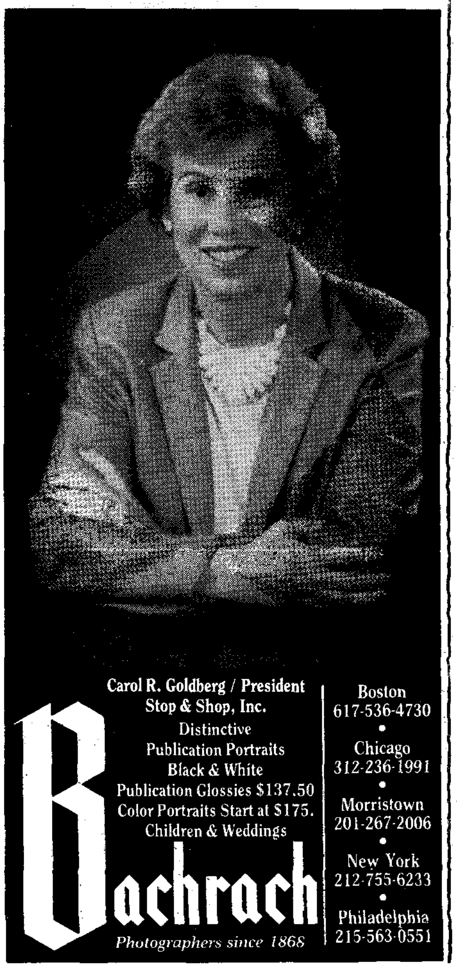

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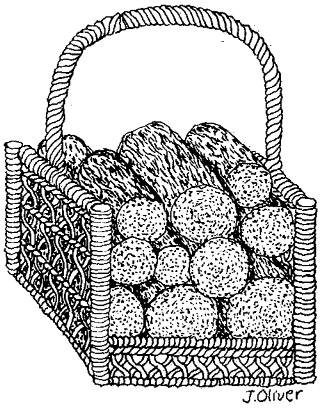
my tongue and see light reflected off the dusty bumper of the black panel truck and sneeze, and sneeze again, and again, until I feel I'm being shot in the head. And wish I were.

JEROME and I sit with our shoulders touching, our backs against the wall, over the floor furnace that heats our whole side of the house until the heating ducts to the new furnace are installed and the floor furnace removed and boards put over the hole it leaves. I imagine Tim is at the porthole of fire in the basement, but he's on the cot set up beside the kitchen wall, so that Grandma Jones will have a place to sleep whenever she arrives here from the hospital to see us, or so Dad can lie near the phone in case it rings. Grandma Neumiller is on the couch, leaning over her knitting of the stitch she has taught to us, and Grandpa is in the kitchen making coffee and, from the sound of his strides, is pouring it out in containers all over the room. Or maybe the stove isn't working and he's checking the wires to see if they're hot, and pulling them out in tangles that smell like our electric train when it heated up. And the floor furnace might be clacking faster than Grandma's knitting needles, because its fan never stops—lifting our hair away from our ears and drying our eyes until they sting, driving in a growing headache. Our heated bluejeans burn our shins, though the line at the edge of being burned is pleasant, like ice. Then Aunt Rose Marie, in a tam, looking like Mom, comes through the door with its billowing venetian blinds. Her long gray coat shakes freshness through the room. She tosses the coat through the door to Mom and Dad's bed, and stamps her feet in snowy bursts. The phone rings, and Tim, not asleep, is up from the cot.



Grandma answers it. Grandpa doesn't like to. Rose Marie, shaking back her hair, tosses the tam after her coat and comes past in bright slacks as Grandma says, "You want my husband," and hands Grandpa the phone. "It's the hospital," she whispers. "The doctor."

Silence, and then Grandpa says, "You don't want me. No, I tell you, you've made a mistake! You don't want to tell me this—you want my son, Martin!"

The phone goes clack. Rose Marie drops on the couch. There are noises in the kitchen like water running, and then Grandpa's legs are at the couch and both pairs of feet, Rose Marie's still wet, go past us and into the bedroom. "What!" Rose Marie cries, and reappears, one arm in her coat, her pretty face pulled in all directions—is it a joke? Grandma hurries to her through a heated smell like shoes burning up, and Grandpa looks back at us as they hug and hiccups start, or a laugh, and then Rose Marie is out the door, coughing or crying, with a clash of the blinds.

The furnace fan flutters our pants legs with dusty air that tastes used up—bluejeans burning at a touch, ankles raw, squares of heat printed in us. Grandpa helps Grandma to the couch, and she pushes a handkerchief under her glasses, lifting them high, whispering, "What, oh, what now?" as Grandpa stares at us. A car pulls up, in a noisy slashing of air outside the door, and we hear Grandma Jones's grainy voice. She has been in Peoria since her train from Minneapolis (I see implements swaying in a weedy lot) arrived there. The car pulls off, a billowing wave hits the wall—the venetian blinds crashing—and Grandma Jones is in the door, a suitcase in each hand, no hat, the coiled hair around her head sparkling with snow, her mouth opening, then the thunder of her suitcases dropped. Her arms rise and she starts across the room, hands out, after us with this frozen mask of her face. The cold crush of her clothes and icy hands, her wrinkled cheeks wetly cold, and then her grainy voice close up: "You mean you haven't told them yet? Oh, Lordy, Lord, Lord, Lord. Boys, your mother—my dear sweet child is dead! Thirty-four years old and stone-cold dead to this world! I can't believe they haven't told you yet!"

Others arrive, and then Rose Marie is back with the girls. There's a rumbling of feet or the couch being rolled, and we're sitting on it with Susan and Marie and Tim and Grandma, Mrs. Ebbinger leaning against a wall, a hip slung out. Then Davey is in the door, his hands in a satin warmup jacket

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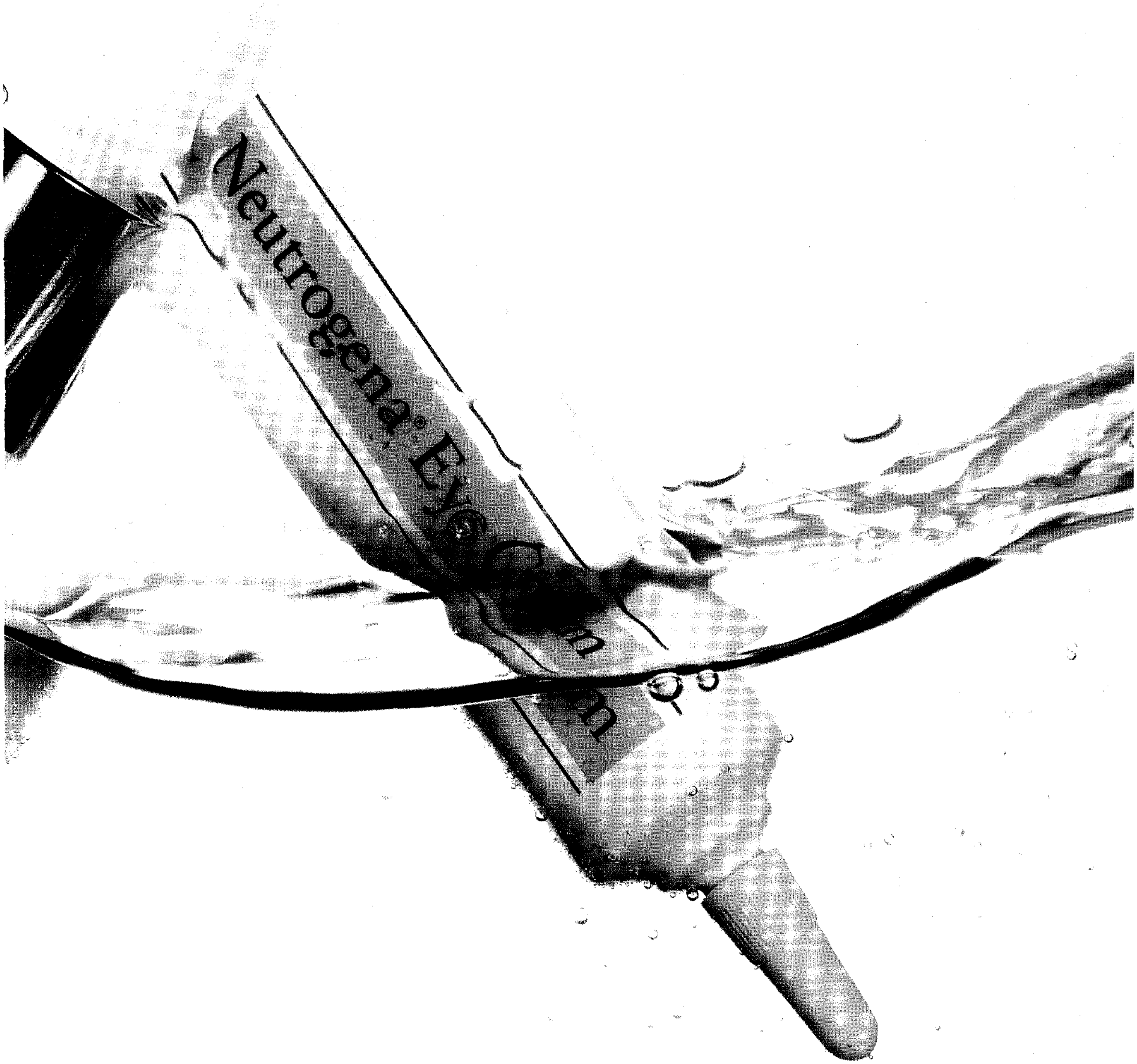
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with reflected light wriggling down its shiny sleeves, and Tom steps up on the threshold behind him, his head bowed —and I wish I'd never wished anything would happen to her so I could be a hero. Jerome and I are back on the furnace, melting on its grill, it feels, and then cold carves our heat in half as Dad steps in, his face waxy-green, moles in Technicolor, his violet-circled eyes on us. His hands under my armpits hurt me as I go above his shoulders like a child, his arms gather me in, and there's a flickering of light like vigil lights while I cling as if he were St. Christopher, and feel burning tears bleeding out of my eyes.

A blank comes, then I'm on the furnace again, a headache like brains running down, and there are more wallops of cold, shoes lining up along the couch, a new pair at our end: Dad's. In the kitchen, chairs are being dragged through a smell of coffee and something to eat—a crude, sickening thought that drives the rest that is said into me like slivers of bone.

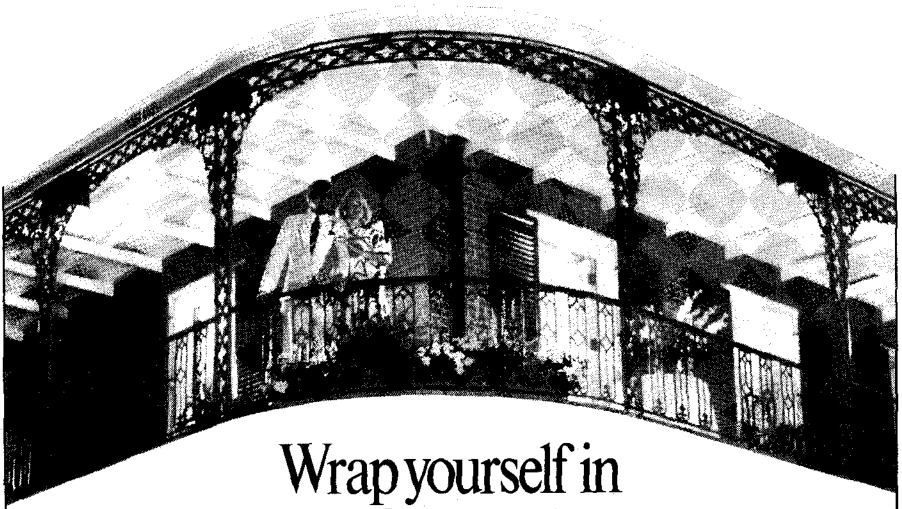
"It was before the coma, before they took her to Peoria," Dad says. "She'd had convulsions. The priest heard her confession, and then said I should talk to her. She said— She prayed the—"

"Even when she was a little girl her kidneys were so poor. She'd go for days without taking a leak. 'Alpha,' I'd say. 'Alpha, drink some water, please! Get your system going, before you dry up! It could be your life!' I'd say."

"For days she didn't want to see me. She'd stare at me and wouldn't talk. I'd turn to go, time was up, she'd call, 'Wait!' "

There is a wobble to Dad's turned-up shoes—he can't continue; one floats up to rest on a knee; the white skin of his leg shows; he pulls at a sock to cover it, wipes around the toe of the shoe with his thumb, and if he doesn't jump up and go at somebody soon, I will.

"She asked about—" Grandma Jones's grainy voice is like several together. "She asked about the kids when I first got there—hardly four days now, oh! So thin even then. Her arms. She said she was tired, and who wouldn't be, with all those contraptions hooked up to her, iron pipes around her bed, and the hell they put her through? Every hour a new test. Who ever heard of uremia, anyway? What kind of sickness is that! Lordy, the last time she asked for Daddy I couldn't make her understand he wasn't there. 'He isn't well—can't



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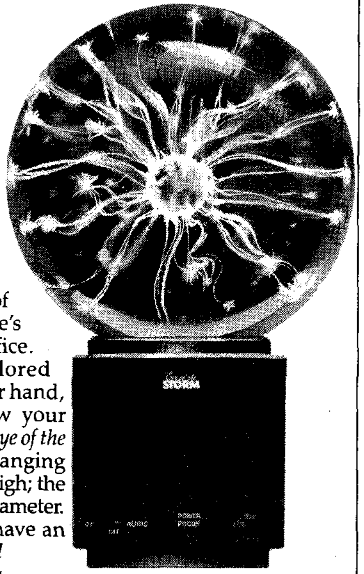

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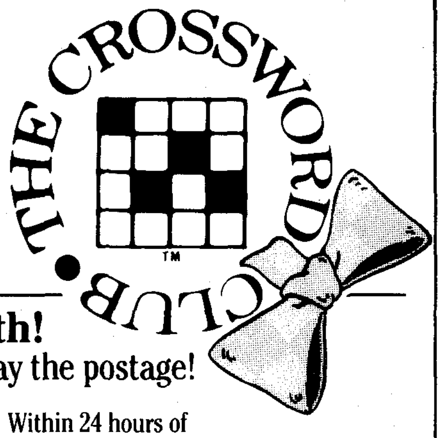

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travel,' I said. 'But I just talked to him,' she said. I felt like a damn fool conniving for her attention. 'He's five hundred miles off!' I yelled. 'He's not here! Talk to *me!*' Who knows what she was seeing, or afraid of then? So I said, 'All right, I'll get him for you, Alpha. You hang on. It's O.K. I'm here.' "

Dad's whisper almost dies. "I couldn't stand . . . wouldn't talk. She said it was her fault, whatever it was, and to forgive her. God! I knew it was over when she said I should remarry."

"*Martin!*" Grandma Jones cries. "She wouldn't say that! She couldn't have. You wouldn't remarry, Martin. The kids!"

"He may do as he pleases," Grandma Neumiller says. "It's time he had peace."

"Why, why"—Grandma Jones is going further into the high, grainy sound so peculiar to her voice—"why, Mrs. Neumiller! You have no idea what you're saying. You're in shock!"

"I feel I'm ice." Dad.

"She never looked herself! Like my daughter! Till they pulled those damn, miserable tubes out at last! They had a tube up every hole the poor girl had!"

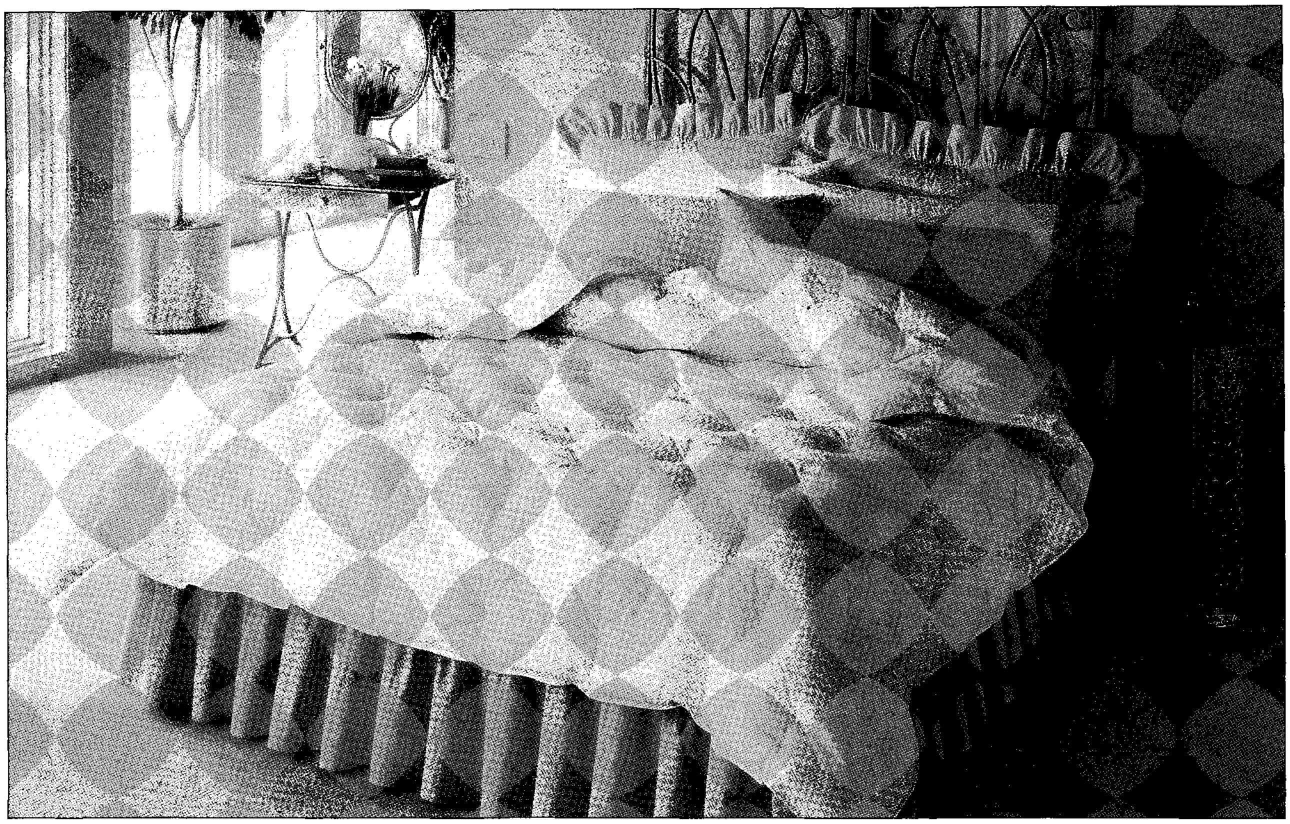
"Mrs. Jones! These children!"

I feel the gold of that day of Thanksgiving vacation widen out behind her at the window as somebody helps me to my feet. Jerome leads me out to the kitchen, to the table in the center of the room, its leaves out. Bowls of chicken soup on it, with chunks afloat in yellow fat, my tongue turning thick as I see through scorched eyes the wormy splash of noodles slipping off spoons all around the table.

Jerome won't eat. He has his elbows on the tabletop, hands to his forehead, leaning over his bowl, dripping drops into the oily pools. Nobody can make him look up. Both Grandmas try. Dad does. And then, in a voice climbing to its highest note, Grandma Jones cries, "Jerome, Jerome, you have to eat!"

I feel watched, and feel that if Mom or whoever is watching can see this far, she can see down to where a thought like a snake kicked out of sight lies curled: *If only I'd been different from the start, this never would have happened to her.*

"Yes, you do," I say to Jerome. "You have to. Look, I'm eating. See, Jerome. Watch." I choke a few spoonfuls down, gagging so hard that trickles squeeze out my nose, and people move back, and then the real thought



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I've hidden strikes through my madness: *It'll be one less mouth to feed.*

HANDS lift me up so I can sign my name in a register beside Jerome's. Then Dad is above us in a dark suit, his face in softer shades of the shocking colors of the other night, and thinner, as he leans to us, his tie slipping out and swinging free, a fatty bulging rawness like liver squeezing from the corners of his eyes, and touches our arms. "Now, your mother might look different to you, boys," he says. "She's been very ill." And I feel the person loosed in my madness trying to say, *Ill*, Dad? *Ill*? Isn't she dead?

He goes to the double doors ahead, and his hands, clenched at his sides, a rosary wrapped around one of them, begin to gesture, his fingers turning out, then curl into fists again, and with his head down he steps into the light of the perfume-and-flower-smelling room, and one hand rises, pale and eloquent, above his chest and cleaves the air as he sails out of sight, and I hear him say in a miniature of the voice he used to use in front of his classes, in a room many years removed from this one, "And by a sleep to say we end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to."

FATHER SCHIMMELPFENNIG, who has driven from North Dakota through a blizzard, assists the missionary priest at her Requiem. Davey serves alone, and the priests sing a High Mass without accompaniment. The walls and ceiling of the church are finished in pink and purplish Celotex, and the alcove of the altar is so shallow, and its platform is carpeted in such a dull red, that I think, I've served here? The furnace isn't lit on weekdays, and everybody's breath rises like smoke. After the Gospel in Latin, Father Schimmelpfennig turns from the altar and takes a step to the Communion rail, which wobbles at a touch of his vestments; he steadies it with his fingertips, looks down at her lavender casket, looks out at us, and then lays his hand over the head of the casket and says, "Alpha Neumiller was a saint."

—LARRY WOIWODE

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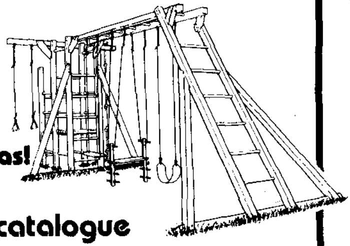

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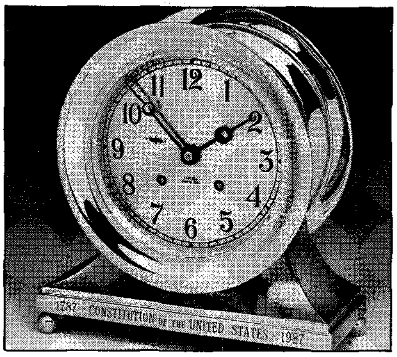

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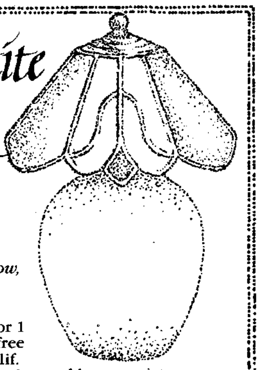

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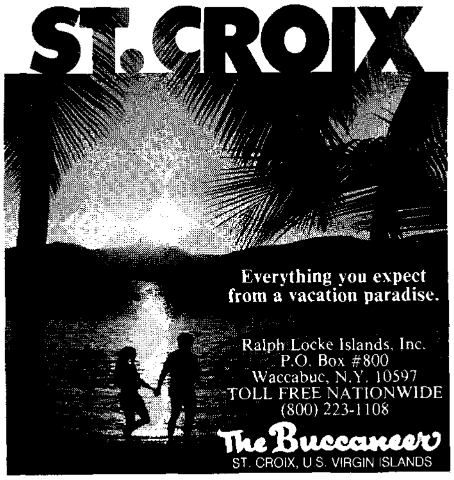

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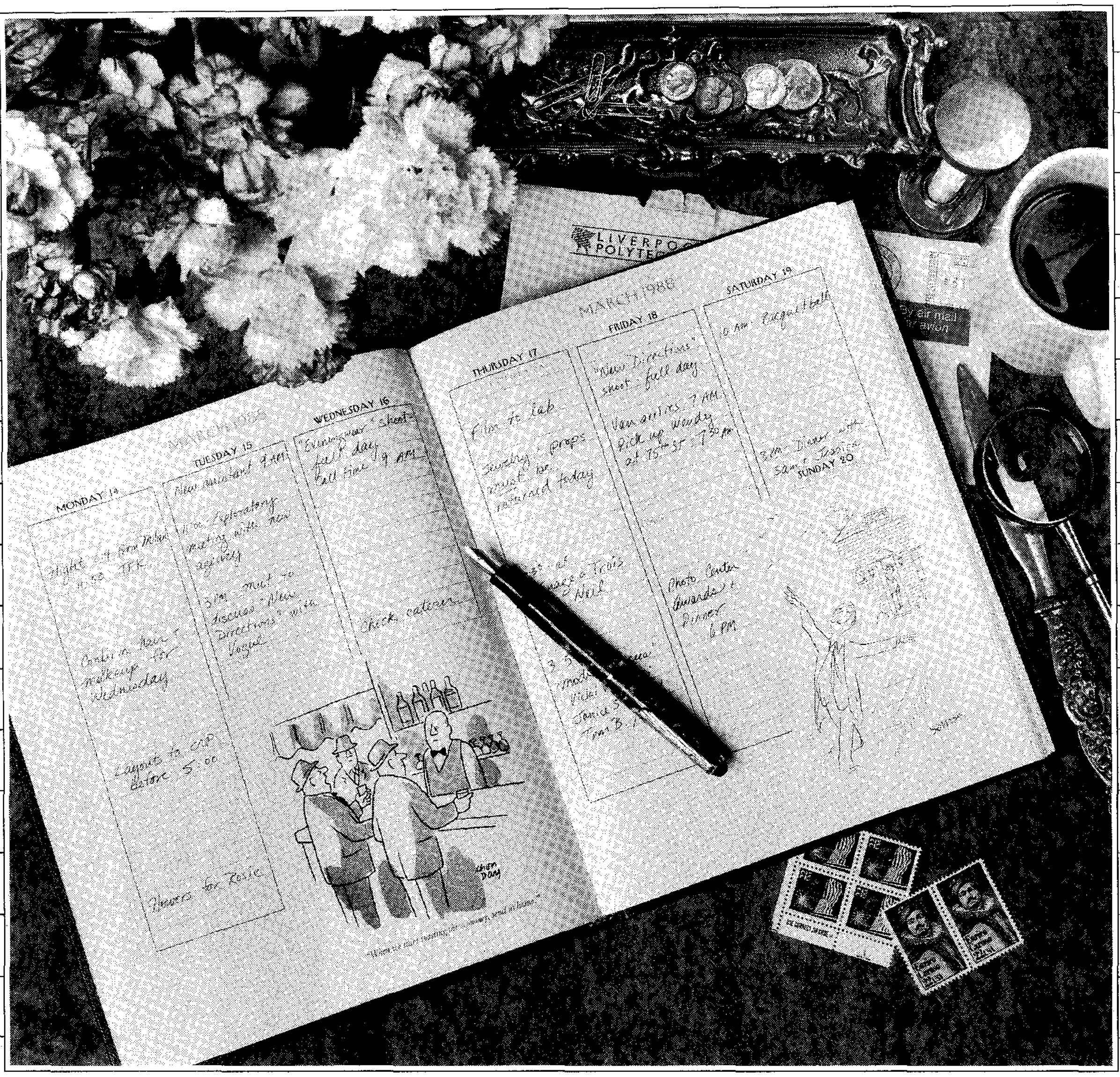

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

DARK TIME

ON a mesa near Flagstaff, Arizona, a low house made of concrete blocks sits in a forest of ponderosa pines. It resembles a bomb shelter. A second house rests on top of it—a soaring structure with walls made of volcanic boulders and glass. One evening in October of 1985, I was sitting at the dining-room table inside the house made of boulders and glass, with the planetary scientist Eugene M. Shoemaker. We had just finished a dinner of homemade enchiladas, and he was examining a newspaper. He read aloud, "Astronomers Locate Possible Distant Galaxy." Then he put on a pair of half glasses and peered at the story. "What in the heck is this? What's this mean?" he said. "There's only about a hundred billion visible galaxies."

"I wonder which one they found," Carolyn Shoemaker remarked dryly as she cleared the dishes from the table. Night had fallen, and a steady rain poured down.

Gene dropped the newspaper on the table. He had a clipped mustache, and a robust face tanned by years of prospecting for the remains of giant craters left by asteroids and comets that had struck the earth. He wore a bolo tie with a clasp of Hopi silver in the shape of an eagle. "Astronomers have essentially abandoned the solar system," he said. "In the nineteenth century, the solar system was the object of central interest in astronomy. As their tools improved, astronomers focussed their attention on what they called the larger questions." His face creased into a grin, and he added, "So the geophysicists and geologists came along and adopted this orphan—the solar system."

A drumroll of rain hit the house and reverberated along ponderosa rafters. Gene and Carolyn and their three children had lived in the lower house until it started to feel cramped, whereupon the roof seemed a natural place to begin another house. Eventually, the children had grown up and moved out, and now Gene's mother lived in the lower house.

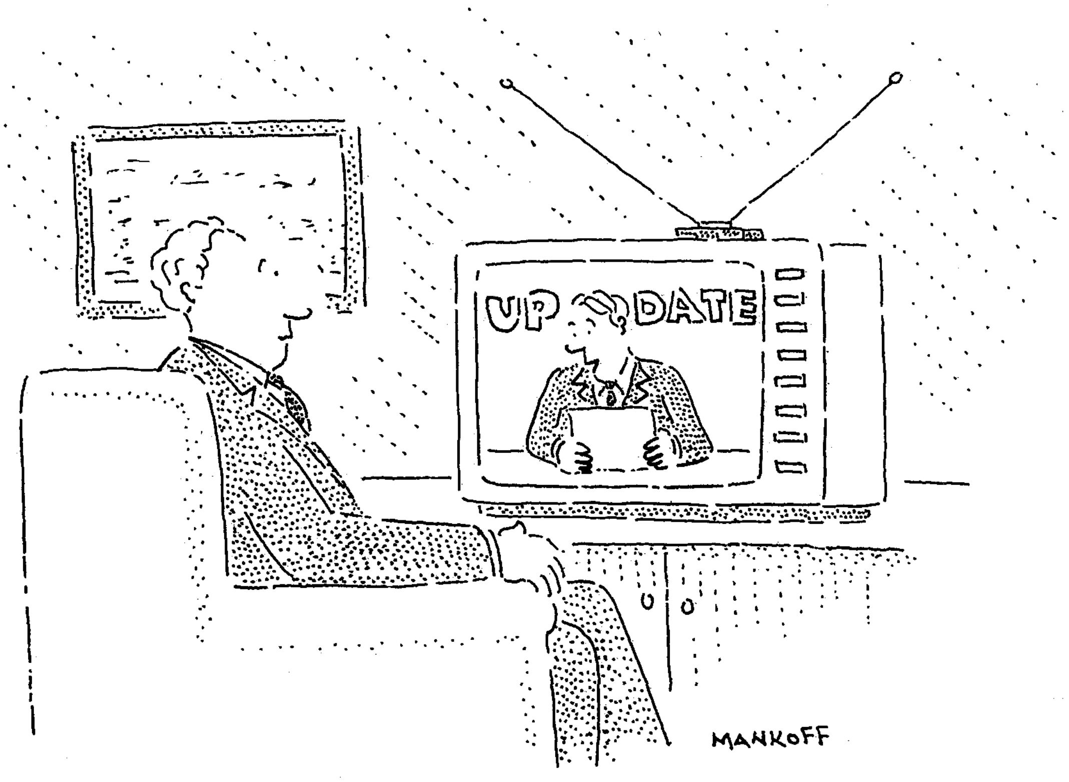
"We're going to go after something new at Palomar this month," Gene said. He picked up a sheet of computer paper and unfolded it. It was headed "Known Trojans," and it contained a list of heroes from the Trojan War—Achilles, Patroclus, Hektor, Nestor, Priam. Each name was that of a minor planet in orbit around the sun, and each name was followed by a long string of numbers describing that planet's orbit. A minor planet is the same thing as an asteroid. Gene said that lately he had been thinking about these Trojans, and he had begun to wonder if there might be a lot of *unknown* Trojans out there. He ran his finger across blocks of text composed of numbers. "Look at these orbital elements," he said. "You can just see that the Trojan clouds are really enormous." I couldn't tell anything at all from looking at the computer paper, but when Gene looked at the strings of numbers, evidently he could see in his mind's eye two immense, uncharted clouds of asteroids out by Jupiter. "These clouds cover a heck of a lot of sky," he said. "The kind of sky we can explore with a little wide-field telescope."

"If the rain stops, Gene," Carolyn said from the kitchen, where she was washing the dishes.

A lugubrious noise hammered the roof. He looked up. "This is kind of discouraging," he said.

Carolyn came out of the kitchen. She said gently, "If it's raining in Flagstaff, Gene, then it's probably raining on Palomar Mountain."

What had sparked Gene's interest in the Trojan asteroids was the fact that Carolyn had recently discovered a new one while she was searching through some negatives. She had been looking for earth-crossing asteroids—stray asteroids whose orbits cross the earth's orbit, putting the earth at some risk of being hit—but instead she had found this Trojan. It was big, as minor planets go—a sooty ball about eighty miles across, and by far the largest thing the Shoemakers had ever found. Having discovered it, they were entitled to give it a name. By long-standing tradition, this type of planet is named after a hero from the Trojan War. They studied a copy of the Iliad. "The big names were all taken," Gene said. "We thought we were going to have to scrape the barrel. Get into the minor troops." Then they came across the name Paris. "For



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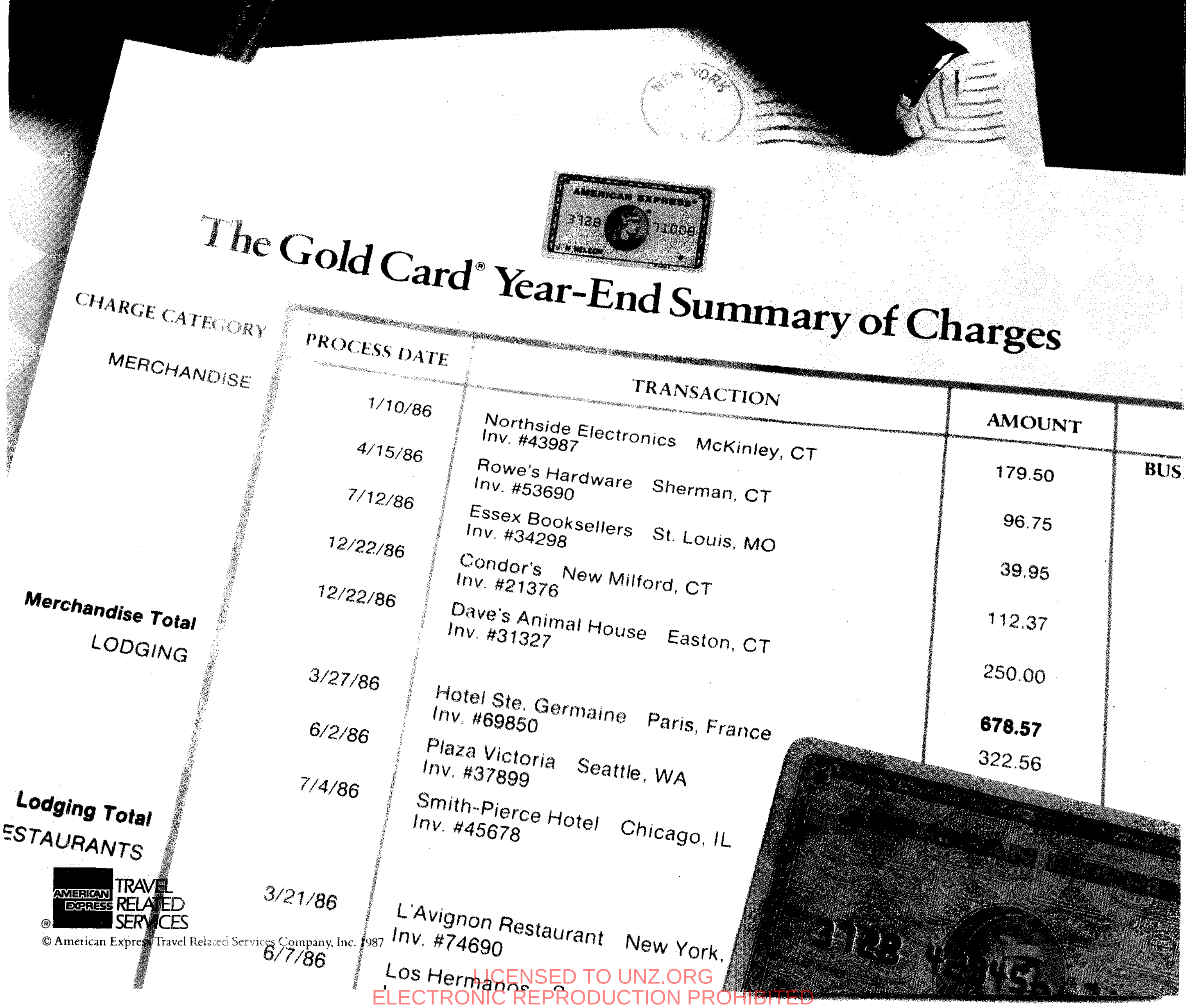

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MERCHANDISE	1/10/86	Northside Electronics McKinley, CT Inv. #43987	179.50	
	4/15/86	Rowe's Hardware Sherman, CT Inv. #53690	96.75	
	7/12/86	Essex Booksellers St. Louis, MO Inv. #34298	39.95	
	12/22/86	Condor's New Milford, CT Inv. #21376	112.37	
	12/22/86	Dave's Animal House Easton, CT Inv. #31327	250.00	
Merchandise Total			**678.57**	
LODGING	3/27/86	Hotel Ste. Germaine Paris, France Inv. #69850	322.56	
	6/2/86	Plaza Victoria Seattle, WA Inv. #37899		
	7/4/86	Smith-Pierce Hotel Chicago, IL Inv. #45678		
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some reason, Paris had never been used. I don't know why. Paris was the guy who started the war."

There were two clouds of Trojans, one on either side of Jupiter and sharing its orbit. Trojans are distant, slow-moving asteroids, darker than anthracite coal, and for these reasons only forty had been found, whereas in the main asteroid belt, which lies between Jupiter and Mars, thousands of minor planets had been found. The earth was about to swing by one of the two clouds of Trojan asteroids. The moonless time of the month, which astronomers call dark time, had arrived, and the Shoemakers had decided to devote some of their allotted dark time on the eighteen-inch Schmidt telescope at the Palomar Observatory, in California, to a search for Trojan asteroids.

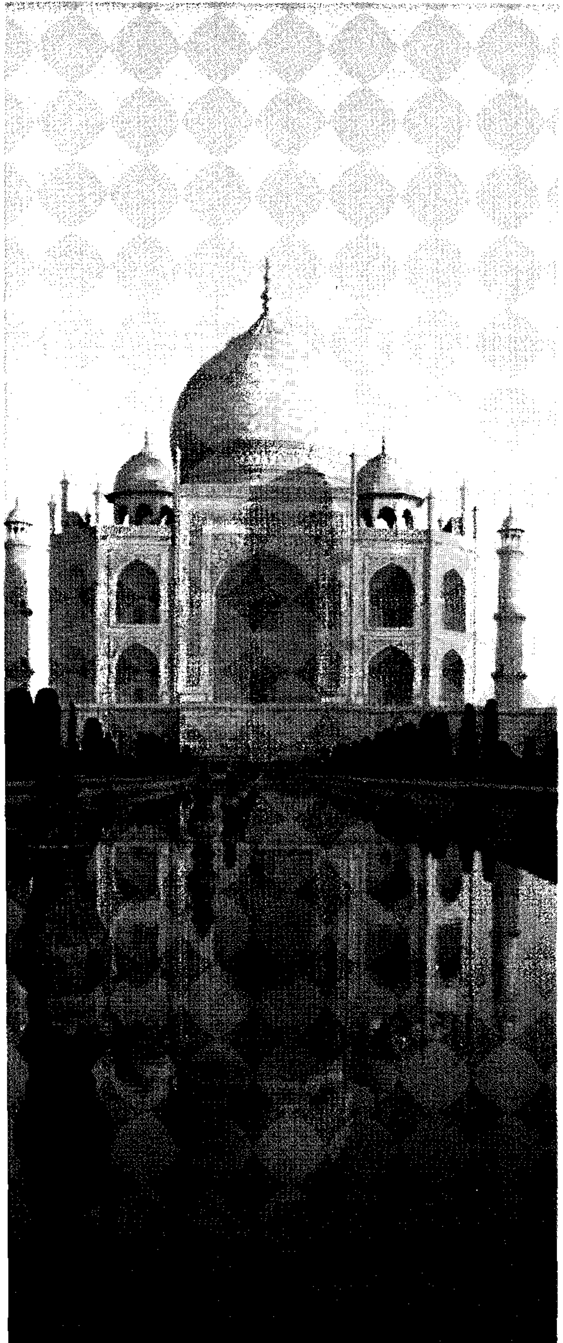
The Trojan clouds had never been completely explored. Scattered pinpoints of light, barely resolvable on a photographic emulsion, they fanned out for half a billion miles on either side of Jupiter. Nobody knew for sure how they had got there or what they were made of. In 1906, the German astronomer Max Wolf discovered an asteroid in Jupiter's orbit, wobbling sixty degrees ahead of Jupiter, as if Jupiter were pushing it along. Wolf named it Achilles. Achilles had somehow wandered into a region of space where the gravitational fields of Jupiter and the sun formed a stable pocket of gravity that left the asteroid bobbing up and down in limbo. The French mathematician J.-L. Lagrange had predicted such a peculiarity in orbital systems more than a century before, calculating that there would be dimples in gravity sixty degrees on either side of any body in orbit around another body. A stray object that happened to fall into one of these dimples would oscillate inside the dimple and never leave it without a push.

Achilles was the first object found trapped in Jupiter's leading Lagrangian point. Then Patroclus was found in Jupiter's trailing Lagrangian point, travelling sixty degrees in Jupiter's wake, as if Jupiter were pulling it along on a track. It soon became apparent that two hosts of minor planets bracket Jupiter. A style of naming them became established: with a few exceptions (Patroclus among them), asteroids that travel ahead of Jupiter are named for heroes from the Greek side of the war, while asteroids that trail Jupiter are named for heroes from the Trojan side. The two clouds are known formally as the Greeks and the Trojans, but astronomers usually refer to both clouds simply as Trojans.

The core of the Greek cloud was now at the top of the sky around midnight. "We are looking at an opportunity to find a heck of a lot more of these guys," Gene said. "I think there could be two hundred thousand Trojan planets bigger than a kilometre across, total, for both clouds. I would add that this is not the received wisdom about the Trojan planets." He suspected that the Trojan clouds might extend far above and below the plane of the solar system, where nobody had ever looked systematically for Trojans before. "That's where we are hoping to hit pay dirt," he said.

Asteroid clouds contain a range of debris—everything from dust and sand through boulders to small worlds. If Carolyn, searching photographic negatives after the run, could discover a handful of big Trojans, that would imply the existence of many small objects. Big Trojans, lurking in parts of the sky where they were not supposed to, would betray a haze of Trojans swarming like no-see-ums among them. Carolyn would also be scanning the negatives for earth-crossing asteroids booming past, since one of those could turn up at any time, on any film. But if the weather failed them they would have to forget about asteroids for the time being. "This whole thing is a crapshoot," Gene said, listening to the rain.

Gene Shoemaker majored in geology at the California Institute of Technology, in Pasadena, during the years following the Second World War. "Caltech has always been a haven for space freaks," he says. He liked to stand in the viewing gallery of the Caltech optical shop and watch men in white tennis shoes work a polishing machine on the Hale telescope's two-hundred-inch mirror, the biggest piece of glass the world had ever seen. A few miles away, in the Arroyo Seco, plumes of smoke occasionally erupted and a rumble shook the surrounding towns: Professor Theodore von Kármán and his students at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory were testing rocket motors. Then, during the summer of 1948, fresh out of Caltech, Gene found himself working for the United States Geological Survey, mapping uranium-bearing formations in the Paradox Valley of westernmost Colorado. The Geological Survey put



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him in a bunkhouse in a mining settlement, and he would drive a jeep in to the town of Naturita each day for breakfast, five miles on a dirt road. One morning, when he was pounding along, a strange thought came to him. As he tells it, "I started thinking about von Kármán and those rocket motors. I also knew what was happening at the White Sands Proving Grounds—Wernher von Braun was down there firing off a bunch of captured German V-2 rockets. All of a sudden, I got this feeling in my bones. I said, 'By God, they're going to build a rocket and take men to the moon with it! What an unbelievable thing! To be the first man on the moon! And what other person to explore the moon but a geologist!' I decided right there that when they took applications I was going to be standing at the head of the line." He saw a flaw in his plan, which was, as he put it, "if you had told anybody in 1948 that you wanted to be a geologist on the moon, they would have considered you a prime candidate for the asylum." He swore an oath to do whatever he could to get off the earth, but to keep his mouth shut about it.

A lunar geologist would have to know something about the holes on the moon. In the late nineteen-forties, prevailing opinion held that these holes had been made by volcanoes, so Gene taught himself explosive volcanism. The earth's surface concealed many enormous, ringlike features known as cryptovolcanic structures, which were believed to be the remains of superexplosive volcanic eruptions. He studied cryptovolcanoes, poking at some of them with a rock hammer. He also walked around Meteor Crater, a hole nearly a mile across, outside Flagstaff. Despite its name, the majority of geologists were uncertain about its origin. Some thought that Meteor Crater might be a collapsed salt dome, or a hole left by a volcanic steam explosion. Not many professional geologists accepted a theory, first proposed by Daniel Moreau Barringer in 1906, that a nickel-iron meteorite had landed there. Gene, having enrolled as a graduate student in geology at Princeton, set out to make a geologic map of Meteor Crater. Barringer had drilled a series of holes in the floor of the crater, hoping to find the meteorite underneath. He never did. Gene examined Barringer's old core samples and came up with a lot of shattered rock that contained microscopic droplets of quartz glass saturated with par-

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ticles of meteoritic iron. Around the lip of the crater, he found layers of sedimentary rock peeled back from the rim like the petals of a flower. He discovered that these layers of ejected rock had been deposited in reverse order, the oldest layers on top. No volcano, he felt, would lay down ejected debris in such an orderly fashion. For comparison, he mapped craters formed by nuclear bombs in the Nevada desert—the Jangle U crater and the Teapot Ess. There he found thumb-size blobs of shock-melted dark glass blown into deeply shattered rock, and sediments peeled back like flower petals from the lip of the crater, laid down in reverse order. The evidence came to this: Meteor Crater had been made by a meteorite, which had exploded on impact.

Gene stayed with the Geological Survey after receiving his degree. In 1960, he and two colleagues in the Survey, Edward Chao and Beth Madsen, discovered in the rocks of Meteor Crater a mineral they named coesite. Coesite is a polymorph of silica which forms under shock: a wave of extreme pressure must rip through the rock, crushing the silica's molecular lattice into coesite. No known event at the surface of the earth other than the impact of a large meteorite could do that. As Gene would later say, "we had discovered a fingerprint for impact." That brought him to Germany.

The Ries Basin is a circular depression seventeen miles across, on the western border of Bavaria, north of the city of Augsburg. Most geologists had assumed it to be a fossil volcano. Gene's German wasn't good, but the more he read about the Ries Basin the more he suspected that it was an impact crater. He believed that with the coesite fingerprint test he could prove it. That summer, he visited the Ries. On the evening he arrived, he went straight to a quarry he knew about—it belonged to a cement factory, and the workers had gone home—and climbed down inside. He broke up a few pieces of rock with his hammer and looked at them in the fading light. A scientific field now known as impact geology came of age.

The rock was shocked, melted, crushed, full of blobs of dark glass. During the following week, Gene explored the Ries, with a rock hammer dangling from his hand. He found blasted, shocked rock everywhere, a lot of it built into castles, churches, and houses. Fifteen million years ago, during Miocene times, something had come in from space and exploded there. Crustal rocks had offered this projectile the resistance that a tub of lard would give to a concussion grenade. Mountain-size masses of rock blown from the lip of the Ries Basin had soared or slithered for miles across southern Germany. Gene mailed three pieces of the Ries Basin to Edward Chao, who analyzed the rocks and found coesite in them.

That was the first proof that a giant impact crater existed on the earth. Gene's discovery immediately raised the question of just how many impact craters the earth might conceal. At last count, geologists have identified more than a hundred, among them the sacred Lake Bosumtwi, in Ghana; Lake Manicouagan, in Quebec; the Rouchechouart, in France; Gosses Bluff, in Australia; and dozens of eroded or buried craters in the United States, including structures called Crooked Creek, Decaturville, Flynn Creek, Upheaval Dome, and the Manson Structure. Gene thinks that perhaps as many as a thousand impact craters will eventually turn up—"provided we don't cover the earth with nuclear craters first." In 1960, when

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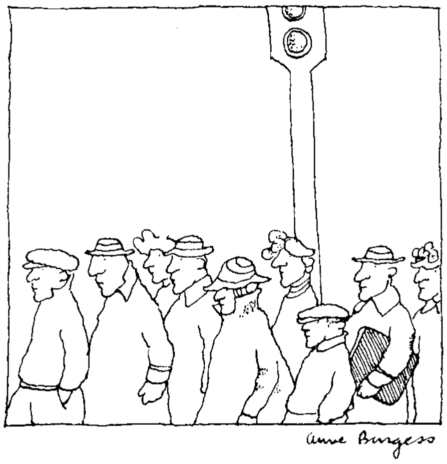
he drove into the Ries, scientists were still arguing over whether the moon craters had been made by volcanoes, but when Gene found a giant impact crater on the earth he virtually ended the debate. Galileo had seen holes and rings on the moon the first time he looked, but to show that they were made by asteroids and comets, and that the earth was pockmarked with similar rings, took three more centuries and a proto-astronaut with a hammer.

Gene soon established the United States Geological Survey's Branch of Astrogeology, now located in Flagstaff, dedicated to the geologic study of other worlds. He played a prominent part in the American effort to put a man on the moon, working first on the Ranger lunar probes, then with the imaging cameras on the Surveyor lunar lander, then as the Principal Investigator in charge of the geological field work done during the early Apollo manned lunar landings. But he never achieved escape velocity. His adrenal glands began to fail in 1962, killing forever his chances of going into space. He would never forget the night launch of Apollo 17, the last of the manned lunar missions. He and Carolyn watched at Cape Canaveral as Harrison Schmitt, their friend and colleague from the Geological Survey, pulled away from the earth on a Saturn V rocket, a machine as tall as a thirty-six-story office building and already moving at supersonic speed as it rolled downrange—while Gene studied, with the detachment of a scientist, the pain of the unfulfilled hope that had started that summer in Paradox Valley and had delivered him to an open field in Florida to witness the launch of the first and so far the only geologist to walk on the moon.

But he could not keep his eyes on the ground. Ever since Meteor Crater and the Ries, he had been wondering about rocks that fall from the sky. How many of them were out there? If you went looking for them with a telescope, what would you find? Could finding rocks in space give you a better estimate of how often the earth takes a hit? The main asteroid belt contains close to a million pieces of rock and iron at least half a mile across, and every population has its rogues. When the main belt tosses off rogue asteroids, they can go into long, slanting, irreversibly chaotic orbits; they can approach the earth from any direction. Every now and then, an unknown earth-crossing asteroid appears in the sky—a fast-moving point of light travelling at an average closing speed of fifteen kilometres per second, or thirty-four thousand miles per hour.

In 1932, Karl Reinmuth, an asteroid hunter in Heidelberg, Germany, discovered the first recognized earth-crosser. It appeared on a glass photographic plate as a bright line among the stars—a near-earth object a mile in diameter, travelling quickly. He named it Apollo, after the god who drove the chariot of the sun, because the asteroid's orbit took it near the sun. (Apollo, as it happens, was also the god who fired invisible arrows at mortals to kill them instantly.) Apollo was in an unstable orbit and vanished, only to be unexpectedly rediscovered in 1973 by Harvard astronomers while it was making a swift apparition across a moonless sky. Five years after he sighted Apollo, Reinmuth found the second recognized earth-crosser, Hermes. Hermes missed us by about five hundred thousand miles—or twice the distance from the earth to the moon—and disappeared. Hermes is still lost. Nobody knows when it will be back. In 1972, when Gene Shoemaker began seriously thinking about a program to search for earth-crossing asteroids, the orbits of only three earth-crossers were accurately known: Icarus, Geographos, and Toro. Astronomers had shown more interest in looking for exploding galaxies than in tracking loose cannonballs near the earth. Yet the bombardment of the earth was obviously a continuing natural process.

Gene and a Caltech geologist named Eleanor Helin founded the Palomar Planet-Crossing Asteroid Survey in 1973. Helin carried on the bulk of the telescopic work during the program's early years, spending long nights on the eighteen-inch and forty-eight-inch Schmidt telescopes on Palomar Mountain. She discovered the earth-crossers Aten and Ra-Shalom, and co-discovered Aristaeus. Aten, which is half a mile in diameter, appears in our sky once every twenty years. Like its peers, it will not remain an earth-crosser forever. Either it will one day pass so close to the earth that the earth will sling it into a new orbit, or, as Gene says, "Aten's got a damned good chance of hitting the earth." Helin also found an asteroid called 1973 NA, which is now lost. It is one of a class of asteroids known as Amors, which are in unstable orbits near Mars—objects that will eventually either hit Mars or come close enough to it to be flipped into earth-crossing orbits. Shoemaker and Helin defined three classes of earth-crossers: Aten objects, which spend most of their time inside the earth's orbit; Amor objects, which spend most of their time out around Mars, occasionally moving inward to brush the earth's orbit; and Apollo objects, which slash deeply back and forth. As of this writing, seventy-three earth-crossing asteroids have been discovered, but Gene has estimated that there are a total of about two thousand Apollos, Atens, and Amors half a mile or more in diameter and able to collide with the earth now or at some time in the future—two thousand drunken mountains driving the freeways, mostly unseen. Smaller objects—the size of the Great Pyramid at Giza, for example—are much more abundant, but are exceedingly difficult to find. From the human perspective, major impacts are rare; in Gene's words, "human civilization is essentially instantaneous." From an astronomical perspective, however, hypervelocity planetoids slam into the earth fairly frequently. We live in an asteroid swarm.



THE night after Gene talked about unknown Trojans, it was still raining. The Shoemakers, resolutely optimistic, loaded their Plymouth Fury for the five-hundred mile drive to Palomar Mountain, a long hogback situated in the coastal ranges of Southern California, about halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego. The Fury was a golden-green boat with a smashed front fender. It appeared to have suffered damage during the inexorable march of American science. As large as the Fury was, the Shoemakers had a terrible time fitting their gear into it. Carolyn's stereo microscope, which she uses to discover comets and asteroids, took up half the trunk, but the real problem concerned a reporter travelling with the Shoemakers, who carried two backpacks and a duffelbag.

"What have you got in there?" Carolyn asked.

"Warm clothes," I told her. I planned not to be the first reporter to freeze to death during a search for minor planets.

The Shoemakers preferred to drive to Palomar Mountain at night, because they could push the Fury over the speed limit across the Mojave Desert. Twenty miles outside Flagstaff, the Fury went *wahump*, and Gene said, "We're bottoming out on the shocks."

"Because you're driving too fast," Carolyn said.

"Carolyn had a good year last year," Gene said, apropos of nothing in particular. "She got five comets."

"I got so that I expected to find a comet every time we went to the mountain," Carolyn said. "This year, I haven't found any comets at all. I don't know what the problem is."

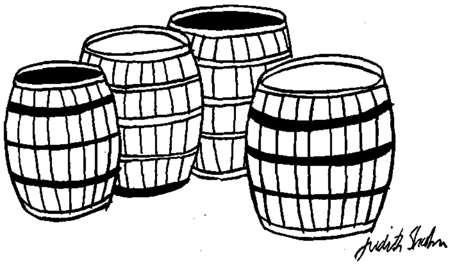
After spending most of her adult life as a housewife, Carolyn had become an astronomer. She was a quiet, rather serious person, modest about her accomplishments. Her gray hair was cut in bangs, and there was a hint of bronze in her skin—the last of an outback tan acquired in Western Australia, where she and Gene had spent the previous summer mapping giant ring structures made by minor planets that had hit the prehistoric earth.

In the course of searching films for earth-crossing asteroids, Carolyn had begun to turn up comets. Some astronomers consider themselves lucky to find one comet in a lifetime; Carolyn had so far racked up a total of six, five of which she discovered during one unbelievable eight-month roll in 1984. Before that, no astronomer had ever found five comets in eight months. Two of the comets—Shoemaker 1 and Shoemaker 2—are what are known as Jupiter-family comets: they travel on short orbits around the sun which take them near Jupiter. They will gleam for perhaps ten thousand years before they go dark. Thus the name Shoemaker may last longer than marble or the gilded monuments of princes. The four other comets came through the solar system on long orbits and have now disappeared into deep space. Among women, only Caroline Herschel, a German-born Englishwoman who lived in the days of Jane Austen, had found more comets than Carolyn Shoemaker. She found eight, searching with a modest telescope that her brother, Sir William Herschel, built for her. "I intend to beat Caroline," Carolyn remarked coolly. After that, she said, she was going to beat William Bradfield, Minoru Honda, and Antonin Mrkos, three astronomers who were then tied for first place among living comet discoverers, with twelve comets apiece.

Each of the Shoemakers' observing runs on Palomar Mountain yields a pile of photographic negatives, which Carolyn, using her stereo microscope, later scans back in Flagstaff. But the microscope goes virtually everywhere Carolyn goes. She takes it to the mountain in order to search films when Gene brings them fresh from the darkroom, since an earth-crossing asteroid can whip past the earth in a few days. When she searches for minor planets, she inserts pairs of negatives in the microscope—photographs of star fields taken at intervals of forty minutes. Comets and asteroids move enough during forty minutes so that they seem to jump out before her eyes. Each pair of films contains roughly ten thousand points of light. Most are stars, and yet the films often seem full of moving debris. Ordinary main-belt asteroids stream in the same direction, like schooling fish. She watches for anomalies: things that seem to go backward, or to slash diagonally across the field, or to float toward her; things moving too fast.

The rain stopped, and the clouds broke. A whitish-pink planet gleamed in the west, dead ahead. "Ah, Jupiter," Carolyn said. "A good sign." We switchbacked off the edge of the Colorado Plateau and down into the Mojave Desert. The Milky Way arched overhead, and Jupiter dropped westward into basin and range.

I asked her how she had become involved in the business of finding comets. "I sort of eased into astronomy, part time at first," she said. "In the beginning, I didn't know if I could take staying up all night on the telescope with Gene—especially in the winter, when it can get well below freezing in the dome and the nights last thirteen hours. I worried about that. I can't wear mittens, because you have to handle a lot of small metal parts when you reach inside the telescope." The pleasure of hunting minor planets had soaked up what she called a "restlessness." Her restlessness came from something deep—probably the American need to pile everything in a wagon and go looking for Eden. Her father, Leonard Spellmann, had tried silver mining in Colorado without much success, so he went to New Mexico in 1920, to try homesteading. In the early nineteen-forties, he bought a two-acre chicken farm in Chico, California. Leonard killed and dressed the chickens, and Carolyn's mother sold them to the local people. The Spellmann family did not have much cash, and at first they found that beans better suited their dinner table than chickens. In the summers, Chico became unbearably hot, and when the family couldn't sleep for the heat they would sit in the yard on blankets at night and talk and sing songs. Carolyn Spellmann was a dreamy girl and close to her family. When the singing stopped and the family dropped off to sleep on their blankets, she looked at the huge moon.



Her parents assumed that she and her brother, Richard, would go to college. Richard got into Caltech. The chicken farm could not handle more than one fancy tuition, so Carolyn went to Chico State College; that way, she could live at home and save on expenses. She eventually got a master's degree in education. At Chico State, she began hearing from Richard about his roommate at Caltech. Gene Shoemaker, meanwhile, began hearing from his roommate, Richard, about Richard's sister. By the time Carolyn met the touted Gene, leading indicators suggested that they were already planning to get married. Then Gene left for graduate school at Princeton. They wrote letters to each other for a while, until Carolyn suddenly broke off writing.

Gene was upset. "What happened?" he asked. He kept writing to her, and to silence. She finally sent him an answer to the effect that "I thought that since you were at Princeton you wouldn't be interested in me." She also mentioned to him that she and her parents were planning to drive around the national parks that summer. Gene wrote back asking if she might like to go camping with him on the Colorado Plateau instead. Carolyn's mother, Hazel, thought the idea of her daughter camping in the desert with this

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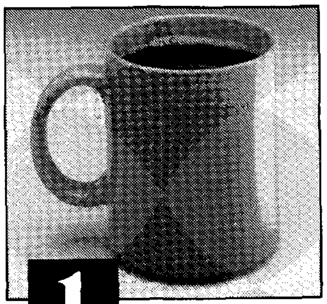

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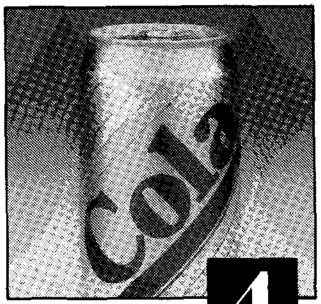

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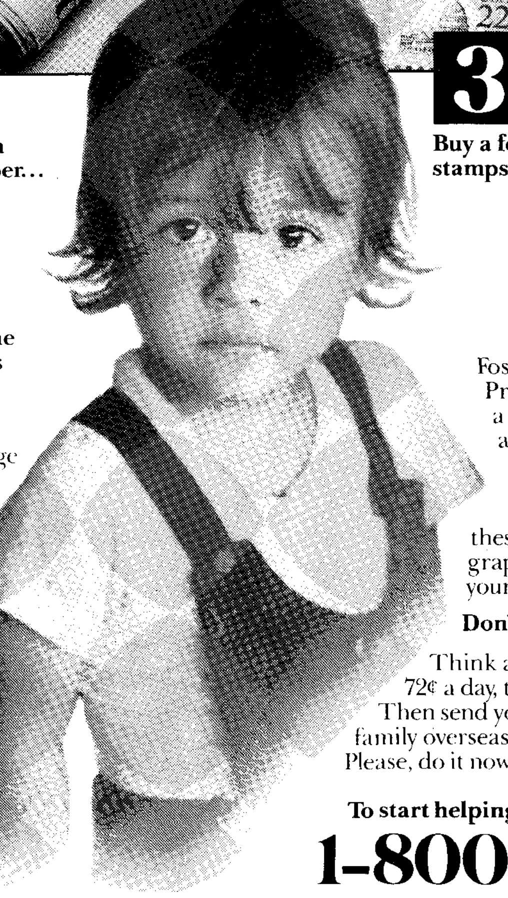

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Gene Shoemaker was just first-class. In fact, Hazel wanted to come along, too. Gene, Carolyn, and Hazel Spellmann explored the Colorado Plateau in a car and told stories by firelight. At the end of the first week, they drove into Grand Junction, Colorado, to resupply. Gene and Carolyn, in a strategic move, left Hazel in a motel room, while they took the car and went out on the town. Gene suddenly turned to her in the car and proposed. She replied, "No problem there, Gene."

She tried teaching junior high school, hated it, and got pregnant just in time to save herself from feral ninth graders. "I spent many years having a family," she said. "I enjoyed that. But once you start finding minor planets it's so much fun that you can't stop. Gene, do you know if that car following us is John Law?"

The Fury rocked as Gene turned around to look. "I hope not," he said.

"In Arizona, you can be jailed for speeding," Carolyn said. The police had explained this to the Shoemakers before.

A few minutes later, Gene swung the Fury into the breakdown lane and brought it to a halt. Time to switch drivers. We climbed out of the car onto a ribbon of highway that crossed a desert playa between mountain ranges. Not another pair of headlights was in view. Gene stood in the middle of the road and stretched. He leaned back and looked up. "The Trojans would be dead overhead," he remarked. His belt buckle glinted in the starlight—it was made of silver, in the shape of a many-rayed star. The sky glittered with lights, but the cloud of Trojan planets was invisible—twenty thousand times fainter than any star the naked eye could see. A smell of damp creosote bushes filled the air. It had been raining in the desert. Not a good sign. "Heaven knows what it's doing on the mountain," Carolyn said. We climbed back into the Fury and slammed the doors, and she floored the accelerator.

In his mind's eye, Gene holds a peculiar vision of the solar system, and it is not any solar system that I had ever heard of. In schoolbooks, the solar system is pictured as a series of flat concentric circles centered on the sun, each circle representing the orbit of a planet. In Gene's mind, the solar system is a spheroid: a dynamic, evolving cloud of debris, filigreed with bands and shells of shrapnel, full of bits and pieces of material likely to be pumped into long ellipses and tangles and wobbling orbits, which carry the drifting projectiles all over the place—minor planets that every once in a while take a hook into a major planet, causing a major explosion. "There's just a zoo of beasts out there, roaming the solar system," he once remarked. Now he began to talk about comets. One of the more interesting shells of debris, to him, was the solar system's reservoir of comets. Comets are lumps of crumbly material, some of them miles across, containing silica dust, carbonaceous compounds, and various kinds of ice—trash left over after the planets formed. Beyond Pluto, the outermost known planet, there is a spherical shell of comets known as the Oort cloud—named after the Dutch astronomer Jan Oort, who demonstrated its existence. The Oort cloud contains a prodigious number of comets—perhaps a trillion (nobody can say how many)—travelling in nearly circular orbits that may average about a light-year from the sun. If Pluto's orbit were the size of a dime, a typical Oort comet would circle about ten yards out. From the Oort cloud, the sun would look like a bright star. Out there, a typical comet moves around the sun slowly, at about three hundred miles per hour; it can feel the gravity of stars other than the sun. Since all the stars in the galaxy are in motion around the galactic center, a star passes near the Oort cloud now and then. A comet subjected to a gravitational pull from a passing star can in some cases be slowed down nearly to a halt—to an orbital speed of around five or ten miles per hour. Then it does what any object does if it is suspended all but motionless over its star: it falls toward the sun. By the time it reaches the inner solar system, the comet is falling at outrageous velocity. It takes a hairpin turn around the sun and heads back for the Oort

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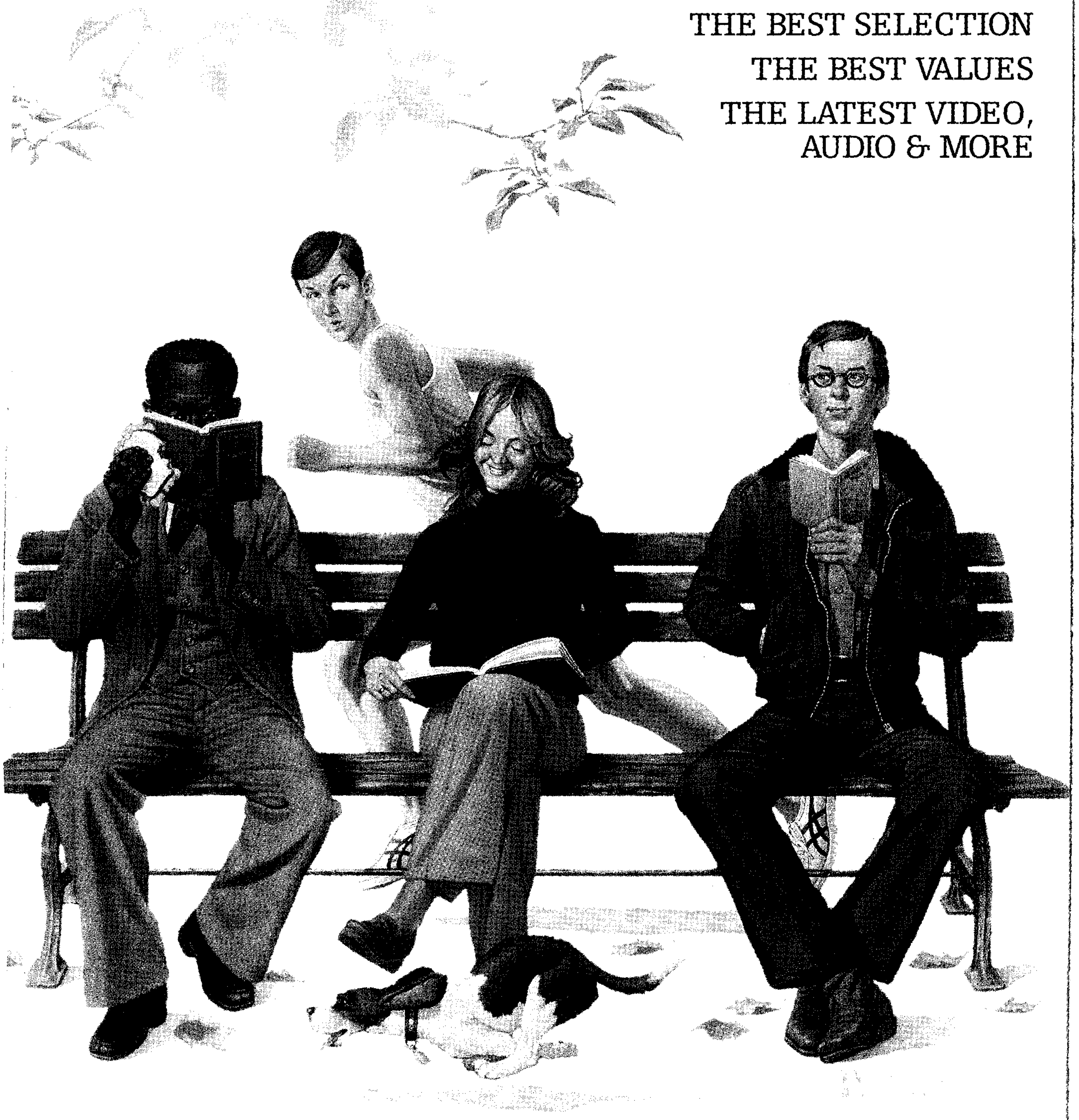

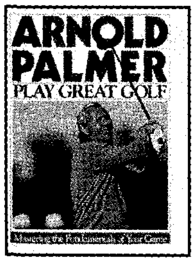
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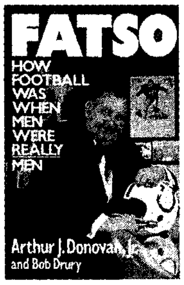
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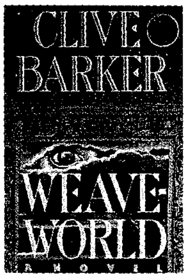
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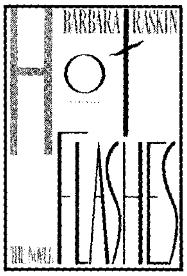
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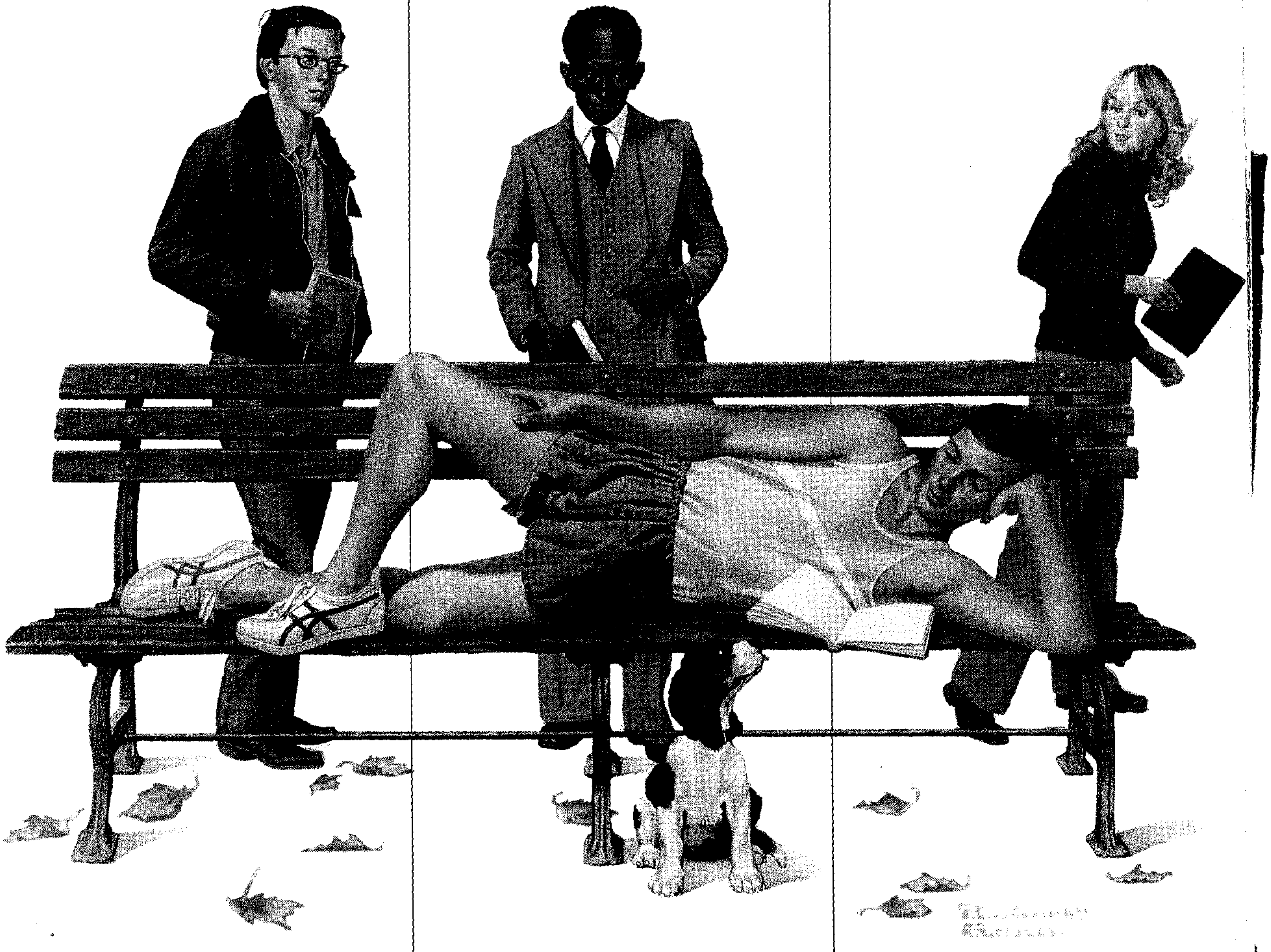

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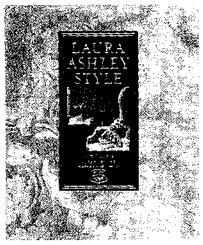
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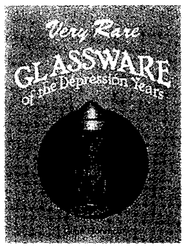
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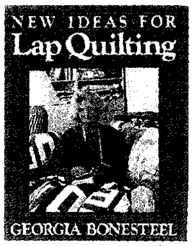
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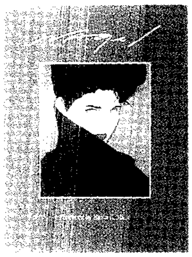

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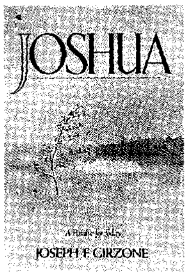
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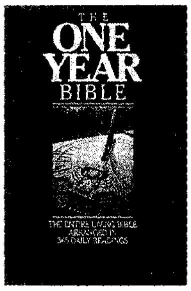
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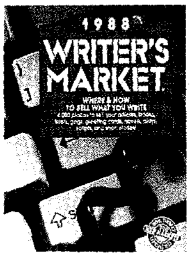
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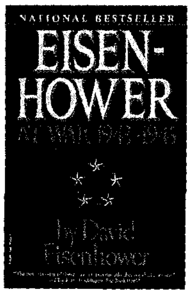
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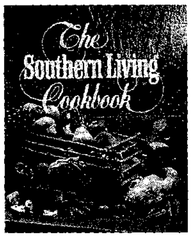
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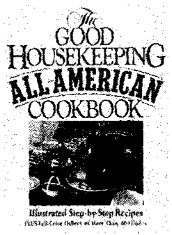
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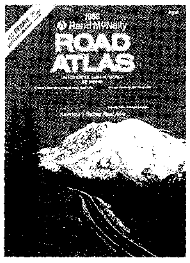
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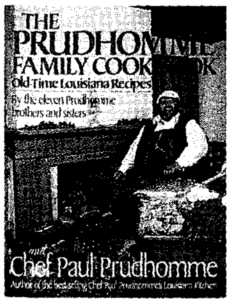
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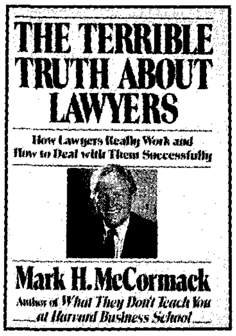
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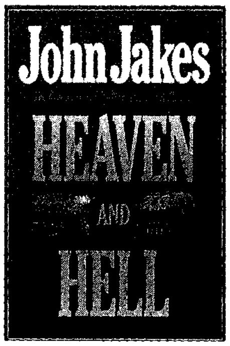
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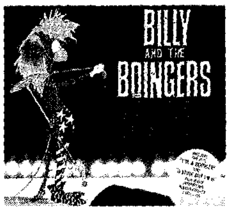
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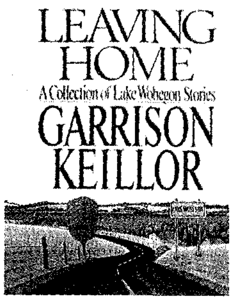
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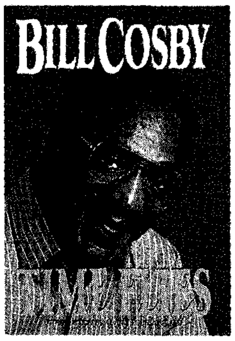
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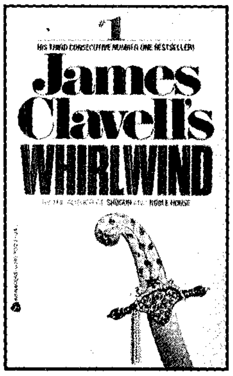
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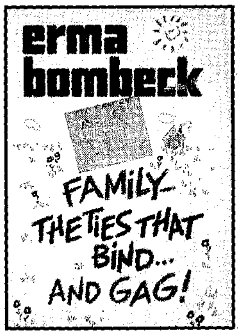
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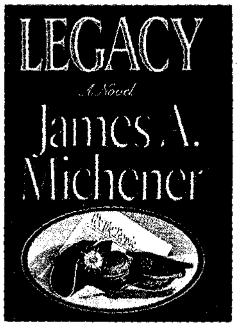
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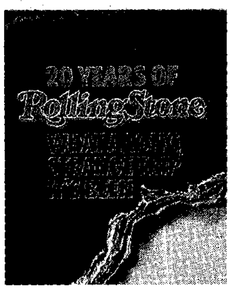
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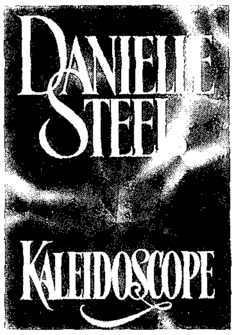
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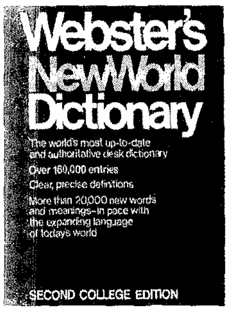
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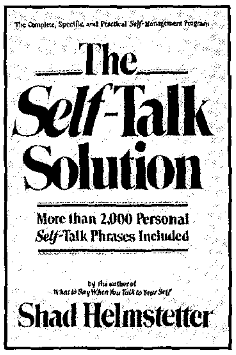
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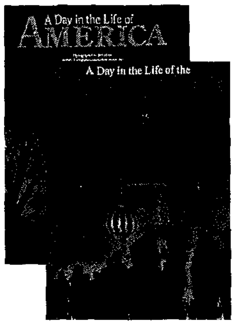
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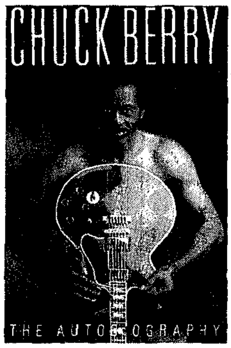
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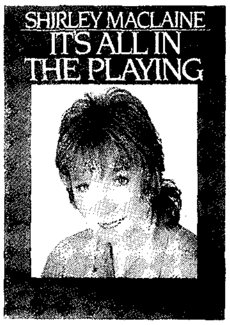
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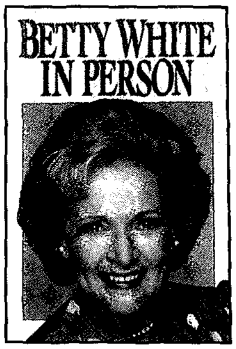
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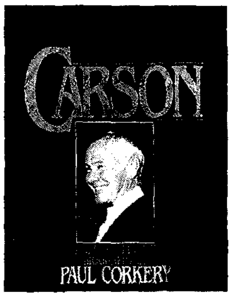
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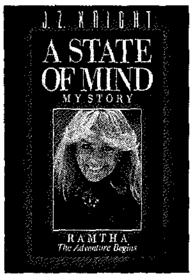
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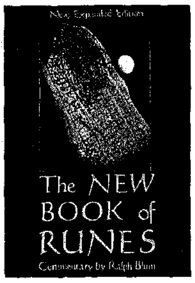
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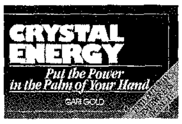
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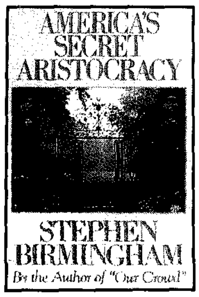
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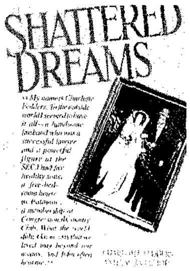
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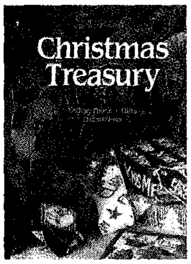
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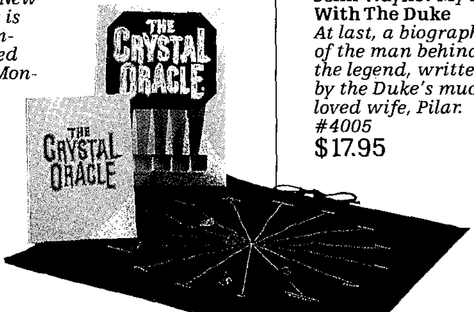
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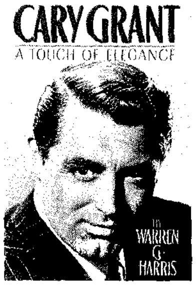
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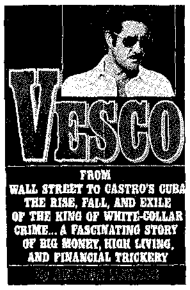
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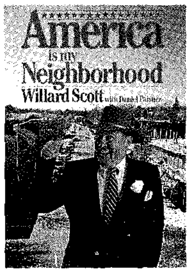
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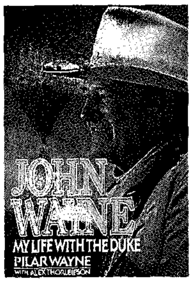
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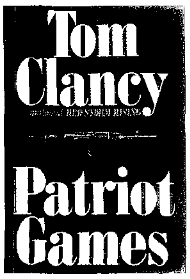
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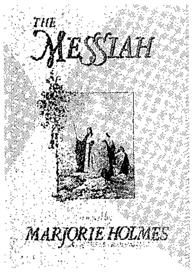
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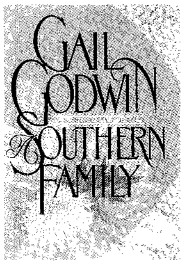
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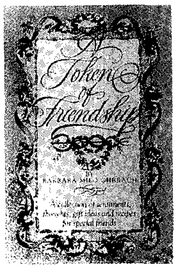
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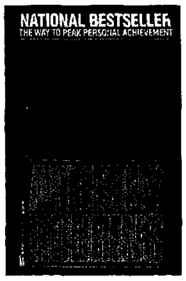
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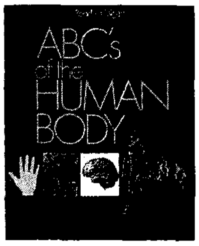
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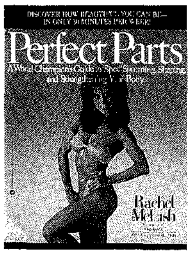
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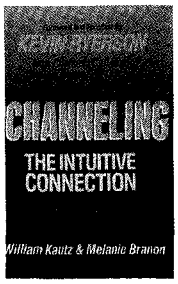
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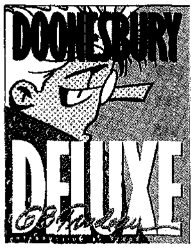
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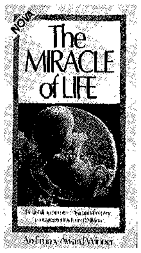

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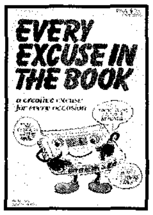

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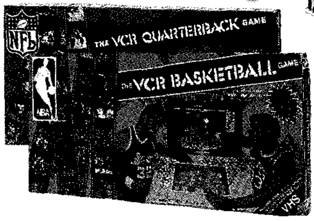

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cloud. Some comets actually hit the sun. Thinking about comets dropping through the solar system, Gene wondered out loud how often comets got trapped in the zone of planets. He wondered, for example, if the Trojan planets were dead, black, burned-out comets that had been trapped in Jupiter's Lagrangian points during some early epoch in the history of the solar system.

At three o'clock in the morning, Carolyn pulled off into a truck stop in the Mojave Desert. We sat at a counter while a waitress in a checked pants suit poured out three cups of coffee.

Had there been more comets at times in the past, Gene went on. Had there been comet showers? What could cause a comet shower? He pondered these questions while he drank his coffee. The waitress stood by the cash register with her arms folded, watching him. The coffee shop was otherwise empty.

What would happen, he asked, if a star as big as the sun brushed near enough to the solar system to pass through the Oort comet cloud? "We might have a close encounter with a big star maybe once every hundred million years," he said. "If a star the size of the sun went through the Oort cloud slowly, it could give those Oort comets one hell of a kick. Comets would diffuse out of the cloud in all directions, which would increase the bombardment rate of the earth. We might be in the tail end of a comet shower right now."

The waitress came over. "Need 'nother coffee?" she asked.

"Sure," he said. "These guys travel at forty-two kilometres per second relative to the earth. That's triple the speed of the average near-earth asteroid."

The waitress filled our cups. She peered at Gene.

"A comet coming in from the Oort cloud could do a hell of a lot of damage if it hit," he said.

Gene went to the rest room, and the waitress chose that moment to total up the check. She said quietly to Carolyn, "Have you all seen the space center up north of here?"

"You mean Edwards Air Force Base?" Carolyn asked.

"No. You know—where the starships landed."

"Oh?" Carolyn said.

"Where the aliens left those rock piles. You must've heard about that. Since your husband is interested in that kind of thing. Those messages to outer space."

"That sounds interesting," said Carolyn.

"There's forces that keep the rocks together. Kids on motorbikes will knock the rocks away, you know? And the rocks will move back during the night. Nobody knows how it happens."

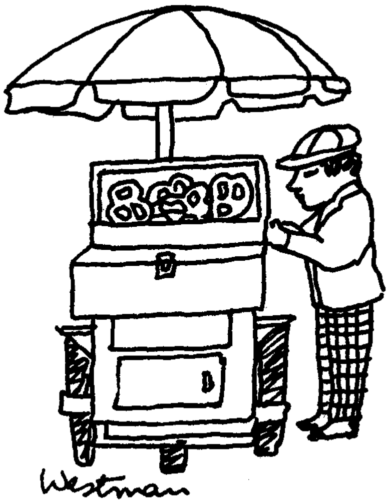
Carolyn paid the check.

The waitress added, "It might be some kind of magnetic force."

"We should go and have a look," Carolyn said.

"Don't miss it. Spacemen landed there. Have a nice night."

THE Palomar Observatory, which is owned by Caltech, consists of four working optical telescopes, each housed in its own dome, along with various other buildings, all scattered across a shoulder of Palomar Mountain, at an altitude of fifty-six hundred feet. The area is covered with fern meadows and groves of cedar trees. The largest of the Palomar telescopes is the Hale telescope, which is seven stories tall, contains a glass mirror the size of a living-room floor, and stands inside a dome as big as the Pantheon. Caltech astronomers, who are proud of the Hale, often call it the Big Eye. It is not the largest optical telescope on earth; the Soviets have a telescope with a two-hundred-and-thirty-six-inch mirror, on Mt. Pastukhov, in the Caucasus. But the Soviets have had problems with their mirror, and have had to cover defects on its surface with black patches, which has cut down the Russian telescope's sensitivity. Officials at Palomar Observatory therefore refer to the Hale as the largest *working* optical telescope on earth. The Hale took twenty-one years to build—from 1928 to 1949. It contains thousands of components—motors and relays, gears and wheels, pipes and pumps—dating from the nineteen-thirties: parts made by companies now bankrupt or merged, parts unobtainable, parts no longer understood. Colossal, aloof, agile, seemingly indestructible, and magnificently extragalactic, the Hale telescope stands among all telescopes as the climax of dreadnought design. Astronomers from Caltech enjoy privileged access to it, and they compete with one another, sometimes fiercely, for the opportunity to use it.



Three hundred yards south of the Hale dome, hidden among cedar trees and underbrush, is a much smaller dome, which contains the eighteen-inch Schmidt telescope, known as the Little Eye. It is one of the smallest professional telescopes in use anywhere in the world, and it is not exactly in great demand. The Hale is used on every clear night, and sometimes in the afternoon, when astronomers point it at infrared stars. During light time—that is, when the moon is up—nobody uses the little Schmidt at all. During dark time, Gene and Carolyn Shoemaker often work with it for a week or longer.

When we arrived at Palomar, we learned that the Pacific Ocean had been pushing racks of cloud fronts over the mountain, leaving the astronomers there feeling swindled. We stayed in a cottage on the hillside below the dome of the Little Eye, staring out the windows over long breakfasts in the afternoon. After breakfast, we would hike or drive up to the dome, where Gene and Carolyn would tackle such work as they could find while they waited for the weather to clear. The dome of the Little Eye is twenty feet across and shaped like a bullet. It bears more than a slight resemblance to a space capsule. It has two floors: on the lower floor is a tiny office, a darkroom, a supply closet, and a bathroom; and on the upper floor stands the telescope. The entire dome would almost fit inside the barrel of the Hale.

Gene worked in the darkroom, mixing chemicals in tanks. He unwound a spool of Kodak IIa-D astronomical film, as big as a roll of paper towels, and chopped the film into disks, using a machine he called the cookie cutter. A boisterous racket came out of the darkroom. *Whomp.* Then a muffled "Damn." *Whomp.* He filled three ammunition boxes with disks of film and carried the ammo boxes up to a laboratory at the Big Eye, where he injected them with nitrogen gas and baked

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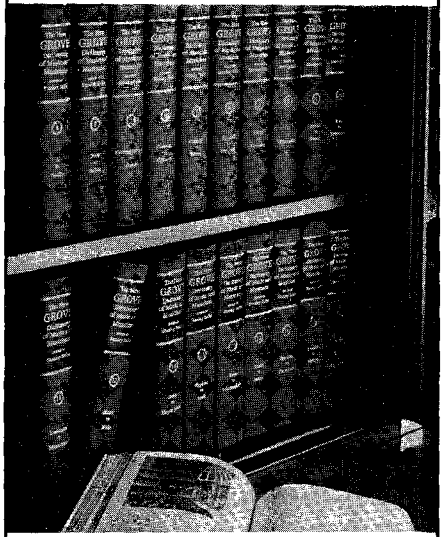

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them in an oven, to hypersensitize the films to faint light. "It's a black art," he said.

Carolyn set up her microscope in the dome's office and passed the time searching old films for asteroids. While she worked, she kept a radio tuned to a station that claimed it brought you absolutely the easiest listening in Southern California. Every now and then, she pulled apart the slats of a venetian blind to examine cloud streets and mare's tails sliding over the mountain. Life on Palomar goes catatonic under clouds. Down at the Monastery—a dormitory where the other astronomers were quartered—people sat around watching television, hoping for news of a break in the weather. Palestinian hijackers holding four hundred hostages on an Italian cruise ship announced that they had killed two Americans, and a series of typhoons in the Pacific Ocean had pulled the jet stream closer to Southern California, which promised rain.

At the Little Eye, Gene spread out a sheaf of papers and wrote numbers in columns, planning the star fields he and Carolyn would photograph during the run. This weather was beginning to get to him. He wondered if the Trojan planets would escape. He paced the office, looked over Carolyn's shoulder. He said he thought he would call Bob Thicksten, the observatory superintendent. "Hi, Bob. Just wanted to see what our status is on the clocks. . . . Still slipping some? . . . We'll follow it carefully. What's the weather going to do? . . . Grim? Ha-ha! Well, the sky looks better than it has all day."

A loud noise rattled on the metal dome. "What *is* that?" he cried, opening the door. A flash of lightning spilled into the office, followed by a rumble. "Aw, for crying out loud," he said. The ground was covered with hail.

This kind of thing went on for three days. Then, late on the third afternoon, something in the gestures of the clouds tempted the Shoemakers to walk to the Hale dome and go up on the catwalk for a view. They followed a road along the ridge, past scrub oaks and chokecherry bushes. Small agglomerations of birds spoiled in the wind. The air smelled of dead leaves and carried an edge of cold. A flash of white and blue burst out of the underbrush, and a blue jay took off with a chokecherry in its beak. The Shoemakers circled the catwalk of the Hale dome, eying the clouds.

"A clear night's not impossible," Gene said hopefully.

As they often did, they spent a few moments looking at the Hale telescope from a walkway inside the dome. The Big Eye was pointed straight up, in its normal resting position, and the doors of the dome were closed. Two astronomers were using a hydraulic lift to insert an electronic camera the size of a mainframe computer into the base of the telescope. The Hale hardly looked like a telescope at all. It was a skeleton tube made of struts and girders. Covered with battleship-gray paint, it looked more like a terrible weapon than like a mirror for making images of time gone by. "Anybody who isn't awed by that thing doesn't have a soul," Gene remarked.

Back at the cottage, the Shoemakers cooked a simple dinner of hamburgers, in case the weather cleared. We ate quickly, watching the clouds through the window. At dusk, while we were sitting around drinking coffee, the clouds broke and vanished. Carolyn stuffed the coffeepot into a paper bag, along with a pack of Oreos, and we all got in the Fury and drove up to the little dome. While Gene worked in the office, Carolyn climbed to the upper floor of the dome and pulled a plastic sheet off the telescope. (The dome leaked.) She hit a button. With a screech loud enough to spall one's teeth, two curved doors on the dome pulled open. Hitting another button, she rotated the dome to the north, toward Cygnus, the Swan—a constellation that straddles the Milky Way. Twilight had eased off, and the black rift in Cygnus—a lane of dust in the Milky Way—was beginning to stand out. Carolyn hauled on a circle of handholds at the base of the telescope's seven-foot tube, pitting her weight against the Schmidt—it weighed half a ton. She pointed it at Deneb, the brightest star in Cygnus, and looked through a guide telescope mounted on the tube. The Schmidt, too, was coated with battleship-gray paint. Rivets and dents on its tube suggested the hull of a submarine that had had some close calls with depth charges. The Schmidt had been styled and built during the Depression, and it looked like an aerodynamic pear. Its tube hung between the bars of a mounting that resembled a tuning fork; as the sky turned, the handle of the fork rotated to keep the tube pointed at the same place in the sky. Two dials on the wall told where the telescope pointed in right ascension (longitude) and declination (latitude) within a coördinate system known as the celestial sphere. Until the time of Copernicus, astronomers had thought that the earth was at the center of this celestial sphere and that the sphere revolved around the earth.

Gene came up the stairs. He put a pile of papers on a control desk next to the telescope. The Schmidt had been slopping all over the sky, because of loose gears, and Gene had found a lead weight from a freight scale, which he now suspended from the telescope on a loop of clear packing tape. "This ought to keep the gears tight," he said. He grabbed the telescope, tipped it over until it pointed sidewise, and snapped open two doors on its side. Carolyn handed him a film holder containing a disk of black-and-white photographic film. He shoved the film holder through the doors of the telescope, locked it in place, and snapped the doors shut. "Ready," he said.

Carolyn went to the control desk and read off the coördinates of the first exposure. "Right ascension twenty-two, thirty-two point zero."

He slewed the Little Eye across the sky.

"Declination plus fifteen, forty-seven," Carolyn said. Her words smoked in the cold.

He slewed again. The telescope arrived at the edge of the Trojan cloud, now rising over a ridge to the east.

He sat on a stool, flicked off the lights in the dome, and peered into the eyepiece of the guide scope. He saw a set of cross-hairs and, near them, a bright star—possibly his guide star. "What's the magnitude of our guide star, dear?" he asked.

"Six point four," she said.

"O.K.," he said, squinting at the star. "It looks like we're pointing to the right part of the sky, anyway." He took up a remote-control device known as a paddle. Hitting buttons on it, he tweaked the telescope until the cross-hairs zeroed on the guide star. The telescope was centered on the first exposure. He said, "I'm ready."

"Five, four, three, two, one, open," she said.

He reached up and pulled a lever, and two shutter leaves on the skyward end of the telescope parted like a pair of unclasping hands.

"Lift-off!" she said.

The guide star suddenly kicked away from the cross-hairs. "Damn!" he exclaimed. "Bad hiccups." He worked buttons on the paddle frantically to get the cross-hairs back on the star before the photograph smeared.

"We always have trouble looking east, Gene."

"It's horsing around. It's going all over the lot."

"That's a disaster."

"Ah, damn!" he said, and there was a sound like *zeee, zeee* while he punched buttons on the paddle. "This gear is worn," he said. "The telescope is oscillating back and forth." A flash of blue sparks danced around the telescope's mounting.

Carolyn said, "You might try putting the weight on the other side."

He switched on the lights and put the weight on the other side of the telescope. Carolyn tugged the telescope to the coördinates of the next photograph, and he turned out the lights. "This is awful!" he said, peering into the guide scope. "It's making huge excursions." He asked for the fast-motion paddle. There were two control paddles for the eighteen-inch telescope—slow-motion and fast-motion. He needed both to rein in this bucking bronco. "This is a two-fisted operation," he commented, over odd noises in the dark—*zip, zip, zip, click.* More sparks fell from the telescope.

Carolyn walked over to the dome slit to take in the view. "It amazes me the way the weather will clear just like that," she said. Surrounding ridges broke through fog, like the backs of whales.

They traded places on the telescope, and Gene called off a set of coördinates to Carolyn. She slewed the telescope and sat on a lift chair. Hitting buttons, she raised herself off the floor; the telescope was pointing laterally for this exposure, and the eyepiece was hard to reach. "Horsefeathers!" she said. "I can't find my guide star. We're way off." They fiddled around at the base of the telescope and finally got it pointed straight. She started an exposure, and the shutters flopped open.

"How's it treating you?" he asked.

"Not so bad now. Seems like there's always a shakedown."

Each exposure lasted four minutes, and when an exposure was complete one of the Shoemakers removed the film holder and took it downstairs to the darkroom to change the film. They

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kept two film holders cycling, so that one was always inside the telescope gathering light. As the night advanced, Jupiter set in the west, and the unseen Trojan cloud climbed to the top of the sky. The Shoemakers crossed and recrossed the cloud. They took strings of photographs, lapped at the edges like rows of fish scales. Every forty minutes, they backtracked the telescope and rephotographed places where they had just been, to make stereo pairs. The cold began to bite. Domes must be kept the same temperature as the outside air, since warm air inside a dome would flow out through the slit, rippling around the telescope and causing the stars to twinkle. A sound of clicking relays from the control desk echoed through the dome. A generator hummed under the floor, and the radio hummed under the telescope. "Our son, Patrick, calls this 'music to go to the dentist by,' " Carolyn remarked. She thought it was time for a cookie break, and she went downstairs, returning in a couple of minutes with mugs of coffee and the pack of Oreos. "Would you like a cookie?" she asked. Several Oreos and a mug of coffee helped to warm me up. I had pulled on a pair of ski pants, but nothing seemed to keep out the cold. The wind drifted through the dome slit, and through as many layers of clothing as one could possibly wear. The stars were brilliant, intense, too close. The red numbers of a digital clock on the control desk flickered, dissecting time. I sat with my back against the dome and my feet curled up against the base of the telescope, listening to Gene and Carolyn talk quietly. They seemed artificially fat in their layers of clothes. They could have been astronauts. The dome slit seemed to be the window of a starship. I dozed off for a while, and when I woke up there were strange stars in the slit—the sky had moved. We might have been lost in space.

"Are you still with us?" Carolyn asked me.

I remarked that it felt as though we were in free-fall.

"We are," she said.

She pulled a lever, and the shutters on the telescope's nose flopped open. "Actually, there was a time when I thought I would go into space," she said. "I won't now." A shower of sparks dropped from the telescope. "A lot of astronomy nowadays is done with electronic cameras," she said. "Astronomers watch TV. To me, it seems more real to be sitting under the

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open sky. I like to think that somewhere out there are these little bodies marching by."

Gene's voice came thoughtfully out of the darkness: "A lot of those little bodies are anywhere from one to three kilometres across."

"I think it would be nice to visit one," Carolyn said.

CAROLYN is a watcher on the masthead: she often lets out the first cry when an unknown asteroid or comet comes over the horizon. She reports such things immediately by telephone to an astronomer named Brian Marsden, who is the director of the Minor Planet Center, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Marsden calculates the object's orbit on a computer. If the object turns out to be an earth-approaching asteroid, he sends out an international telex announcing the discovery, thereby enabling other astronomers to perform detailed studies of the object as it passes by the earth. Carolyn has also discovered and named quite a few main-belt asteroids. Although these are not dramatic asteroids, like earth-crossers, they are perfectly decent minor planets, suitable for framing. On Christmas Eve, 1984, she and Gene put framed photographs of star fields under the Christmas tree. Each photograph displayed a streak traced by a moving asteroid. Their son-in-law, Fred Salazar, received a minor planet permanently named Salazar, with the blessing of the International Astronomical Union, which oversees the naming of celestial objects. Fred's wife, Linda (who is Gene and Carolyn's younger daughter), got the planet Linda Susan. Gene's mother got the planet Muriel. Gene and Carolyn's daughter Christy got Christy Carol, and their son got Patrick Gene. Patrick's wife, Paula Kempchinsky, got the planet Kempchinsky.

In 1801, Giuseppe Piazzi, a Sicilian astronomer, discovered a small planet in the empty region between Mars and Jupiter. Astronomers were not surprised. A wide gap between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter had intimated that that region might hold a planet. Piazzi named his planet Ceres Ferdinandea, in honor of King Ferdinand III of Sicily, which shocked other astronomers, because they felt that planets should be named after gods. So they shortened the name to Ceres. The next year, the German astronomer Heinrich Olbers discovered a second planet in the same area. He named it Pallas, for the goddess of wisdom. By 1807, Juno and Vesta had been found. Astronomers called these planets asteroids, Greek for "starlike," because they were just points of light in a telescope. Many years went by without a new planet. In 1845, a postmaster named Karl Hencke found a fifth asteroid, Astraea, thereby earning himself a pension from the king of Prussia. The land rush began. Before long, minor planets were turning up at the rate of five a year. One celebrated collector of asteroids was a German painter living in Paris named Goldschmidt, who had an apartment above the Café Procope. Goldschmidt aimed his telescope out the apartment window at night. He bagged fourteen planets.

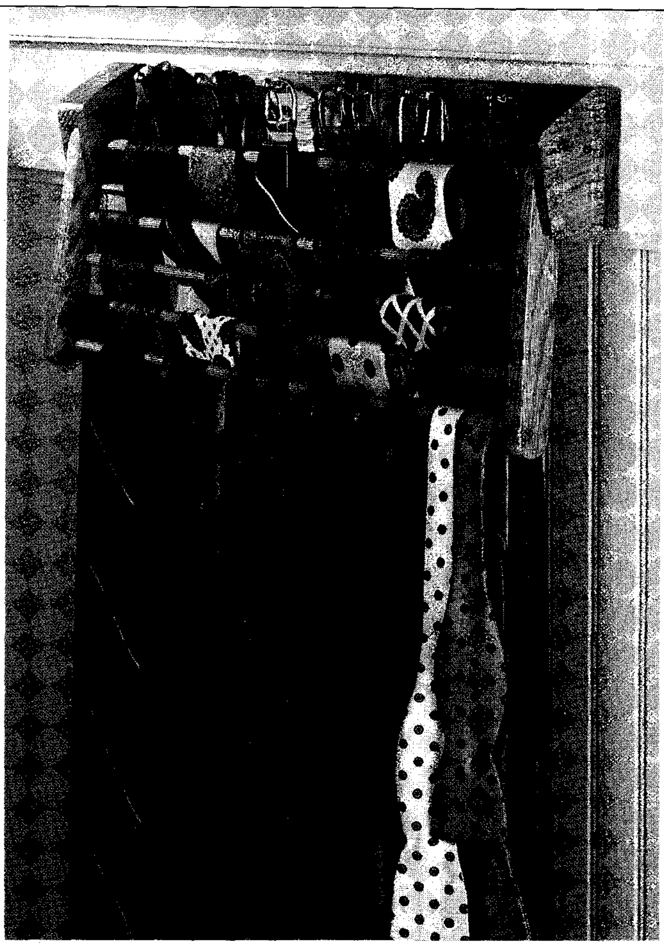
A tradition of naming asteroids for goddesses was soon established, but by the time astronomers got to Dynamene and Gerda the daughter of Gimer they realized that they were running out of goddesses. They began naming planets after their wives, daughters, and female friends—Bertha, Edna, Rosa, Henrietta, Alice. During the eighteen-nineties, photography increased the discovery rate of asteroids to twenty a year, and the names veered away from the ladies. A Boston minister discovered Winchester, an exclusive suburb of Boston, in the main belt. An Austrian named a planet Philagoria, for his Vienna club. Karl Reinmuth, the discoverer of Apollo and Hermes, also found Azalea, Geranium, and Petunia. A Russian discovered and named America. Russians also found Mark Twain, Gogol, Chekhov, Jack London, and Rockwell Kent, not to mention Laputa, named after the floating island full of coprophilic scientists in "Gulliver's Travels;" but when they named a planet Karl Marx they caused an international flap, although nobody seemed to mind when the Americans named a planet the NORC, to honor a computer.

Clyde Tombaugh, of the Lowell Observatory, in Flagstaff, discovered the planet Pluto, in 1930. It is said that he found the ninth planet; it could also be said that he found the eleven-hundred-and-sixty-fourth planet. Today, about thirty-seven hundred planets have numbers, and most of them have names. Eight thousand more planets have been seen often enough for their orbits to be plotted approximately, but an asteroid cannot be numbered, or named, until its orbit is established. Asteroids are named according to the wish of the discoverer, provided that the name does not offend the International Astronomical Union. Up there (or down there, underfoot) drift the planets Kansas, Libya, Ohio, Pittsburghia, Atlantis, Utopia, Transylvania, and Paradise. Dr. Paul Wild, of Switzerland, discovered the planet Rumpelstilz. Dr. Wild also discovered Swissair, which he named for his favorite airline. Somewhere between Mars and Jupiter float the worlds of Fanny, Piccolo, Wu, Photographia, Requiem, O'Higgins, Lucifer, Tolkien, Echo, Zulu, d'Hotel, Fantasia, Limpopo, Valentine, Ultrajectum, Panacea, Geisha, Beethoven, Academia, Dudu, Felix, Bach, Chaucer, Einstein, Dalí, Scabiosa, Nemo, and Mr. Spock.

How these pieces of rock came together is an interesting story. It happens that one of matter's more common habits on an astronomical scale is to collect into a rotating pancake of gas and dust particles known as an accretion disk. The solar system began as an accretion disk. When the pressure and density at the center of the disk rose beyond a critical level, thermonuclear ignition occurred and the sun was born. The disk, thinner now, formed into ice-and-rock balls. Called planetesimals, these were the ancestors of planets. The planetesimals collided and stuck together under mutual gravity, growing into planets. As the planetesimals orbited the sun, they separated into rings. Jupiter probably accreted first, from a very dense ring. As the planets fattened, their accretion rates slowed. They ate up the available planetesimals until only a few were left.

Some planetesimals took their sweet time coming home. Gene Shoemaker's studies of the cratering rate of the moon show that even about a billion years after the formation of the earth and the moon, late-arriving planetesimals were occasionally pounding into the moon, their impacts creating the lunar maria—seas of lava that welled up from wounds on the moon's face. The earth suffered the same late heavy bombardment, but weather erased the scars long ago. The bombardment has dwindled to almost nothing today. Almost. The planets have never quite left off growing. The earth is now gaining about twenty tons a day, through a perpetual rain of dust from space. Every once in a while, it gains two billion tons in one second.

Astronomers used to think that the main asteroid belt might be the rubble of an exploded planet. Now they think



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that it is material left over from a planet that never formed. Jupiter disturbed a ring of planetesimals in the region now occupied by the belt, preventing the ring from accreting into a planet. Jupiter's gravity raked these planetesimals, mixed them up, tossed them around. They could not stick together. Every time two planetesimals collided, they broke into fragments, and Jupiter pulled the fragments this way and that, causing more collisions and the production of more fragments. Jupiter is still churning the main belt: accidents still happen out there. Hammered by repeated impacts, the asteroids are covered with a layer of dust and rubble, and some may even be piles of bashed fragments barely clinging together under their own gravity. Jupiter has already thrown most of the mass of the asteroid belt off into deep space. "If you took all the asteroids in the main belt and wadded them up into a ball, you would get something about a tenth of the mass of the moon," Gene says.

Earth-crossing asteroids are steadily disappearing: they either collide with the earth or are whiplashed away by a close encounter with it. Fresh earth-crossers must be coming from somewhere, and the main asteroid belt is the largest known reservoir of rock and metal fragments in the solar system. While most main-belt asteroids are in stable orbits that do not come near the earth, the belt appears to be pumping asteroids into earth-crossing orbits. The belt is itself gathered into rings, separated by clear lanes called the Kirkwood gaps. Jupiter sweeps these lanes clean. Any fragment that falls by chance into a Kirkwood gap enters a resonating dance with Jupiter, which can flip the asteroid away. Orbital specialists believe that the Kirkwood gaps, along with other unstable areas in and near the main belt, are a source of many earth-crossers. For example, two asteroids can collide in the belt; a fragment can drift into a Kirkwood gap; Jupiter can pull the fragment from the Kirkwood gap and throw it into an orbit near Mars; then Mars can throw the object inward toward the earth. Saturn can also pull an asteroid from a Kirkwood gap and throw it directly at the earth.

"A lot of astronomers call asteroids the vermin of the skies," Carolyn remarked. "Gene and I regard galaxies as the vermin of the skies."

"There are far too damn many galaxies," Gene said. "Carolyn has

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nearly reported galaxies to the Minor Planet Center."

"They're confusing," she said. "They can look like comets. I get so excited! Then I find out it's only a galaxy."

THE Little Eye is a wide-field telescope; it yields virtually a panoramic view. It contains two pieces of glass—a twenty-six-inch mirror and, at the nose, an eighteen-inch corrector lens. (Schmidt telescopes are rated in size according to the diameter of the corrector lens, not the mirror.) Light passes through the corrector, down the telescope's tube, hits the mirror at the base of the tube, and bounces up to a circular piece of film mounted in the center of the telescope. In one snapshot, the Little Eye can photograph an area of sky larger than the bowl of the Big Dipper; it bulldozes the sky. The Hale telescope, by contrast, drills thin holes deep into space-time. Even using fast electronic cameras, the Hale telescope would require more than a human lifetime to make an overlapping mosaic of pictures of the northern sky; the Little Eye surveys the entire northern sky at least once a year. The Big Eye has never caught an unknown asteroid cruising near the earth. "The eighteen-inch is the fastest gun in the West," Gene says.

The first telescope of this type was built at the Bergedorf Observatory in Germany in 1930 by an Estonian optician named Bernhard Schmidt. In 1931, Walter Baade, a friend and colleague of Schmidt's, left Bergedorf and joined the staff of the Mount Wilson Observatory, in Pasadena, bringing with him photographs that he and Schmidt had taken of the night sky using the new telescope. These greatly impressed everyone who saw them, including a Caltech astrophysicist named Fritz Zwicky. Soon afterward, Zwicky and Baade collaborated in a great discovery: they found that stars can explode with extreme violence—an explosion known as a supernova. Fritz Zwicky longed to watch a star detonate. A supernova is a rare event, but Zwicky figured that with a wide-field telescope he could monitor a large number of galaxies and so raise his chances of seeing one. A Schmidt telescope would be perfect for a supernova search. Construction of the two-hundred-inch Hale telescope had barely begun on Palomar Mountain, but Zwicky began badgering opticians and engineers at the Mount Wilson Ob-

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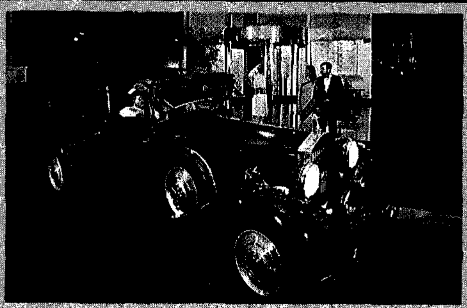

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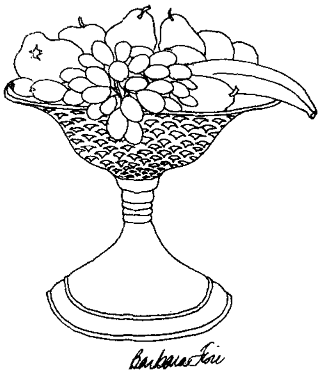
servatory and at Caltech to build him a Schmidt telescope.

First light hit the mirror of the Little Eye in 1936, when Fritz Zwicky began photographing a collection of galaxies in Virgo, hoping to catch an exploding star. He had luck. He found supernovas popping off in galaxies all over the sky. The eighteen-inch Schmidt was the first telescope on Palomar Mountain and the only one there for the next eleven years. In 1947, Palomar's forty-eight-inch Schmidt telescope saw first light. This telescope was Walter Baade's jewel; he had helped supervise its construction. Zwicky's little Schmidt dropped into obscurity inside its thicket of underbrush—an obscurity that deepened in 1949, when the Hale went into operation. Zwicky came to feel that the other astronomers, Baade in particular, were hogging the Hale telescope and did not want him to use it. They may have had their reasons: one night when Zwicky was on the forty-eight-inch Schmidt, he instructed a night assistant to fire a shotgun out the dome, in order to punch a hole through the air to improve the seeing. The night assistant couldn't produce a shotgun, but he did find some cherry bombs, which he lit and tossed out of the dome one or two at a time while Zwicky operated the telescope. The seeing did not improve, and the roar of an apparent firefight at the big Schmidt did not help Zwicky's chances for more observing time on the Hale.



Zwicky began to remark loudly that *he* had built the first Schmidt telescope. Baade reminded Zwicky that Bernhard Schmidt had. Zwicky became irritated by his former collaborator, and began referring to Baade as "the Nazi." That was a cruel joke. Baade was an excitable, rather delicate man, with pointed ears and a bow tie. He limped badly—one of his legs was a good deal shorter than the other, as a result of childhood polio—and he stuttered. He was the human antonym of a Nazi. His hands trembled from nervousness, giving some of his colleagues the impression that he was about to come apart at the seams. Yet somehow whenever Baade took the control paddle of a telescope in his hands the shaking stopped, as if he were transfixed by the sight of his guide star in the way that a deer can be transfixed by a flashlight beam, and he took photographs of star fields that were as fine as powdered talc.

Zwicky had his own ideas about how to achieve this kind of clarity: he thought that photographic emulsions should be mixed with explosive chemicals. When you pointed the telescope at a galaxy and opened the shutters, you would hear a little frying sound and a pop inside the telescope—now, that was what you called a fast film. Zwicky was a maximal space freak. In the early days of rocketry, he put an explosive charge on the nose of a captured V-2 rocket, and when the rocket reached the top of its trajectory he triggered the charge, which fired a scrap of metal off into deep space. Zwicky was enormously proud of the fact that he, Fritz Zwicky, had sent the first human artifact into escape velocity from the earth. He held some fifty patents, including one for an underwater ramjet that he called "the hydrobomb." Zwicky, who was born in Bulgaria but grew up in Switzerland, believed that he was superior to other astronomers both mentally and physically. He regarded most of the other Palomar astronomers as fools and Walter Baade as a cretin. He referred to them as spherical bastards. "They are spherical because they are bastards every way I look at them," he said. He had a flat face and whitish-blue staring eyes. The Palomar astronomers could not get rid of him—he had tenure at Caltech—but they talked to psychiatrists to see if he was edging into psychosis, and the outlook must not have been favorable, because Walter Baade grew physically afraid of Zwicky.

Zwicky made many discoveries. His most profound happened in 1933. Studying the motions of galaxies in the Coma cluster, which is fairly near the Milky Way, he realized that they were moving abnormally quickly—so fast that the whole cluster should fly apart. But obviously the cluster was not flying apart. He concluded that a powerful gravitational force was holding the cluster together. He could not identify the cause of this, so he called it the "missing mass." Zwicky, in effect, declared that astronomers don't know what the universe is

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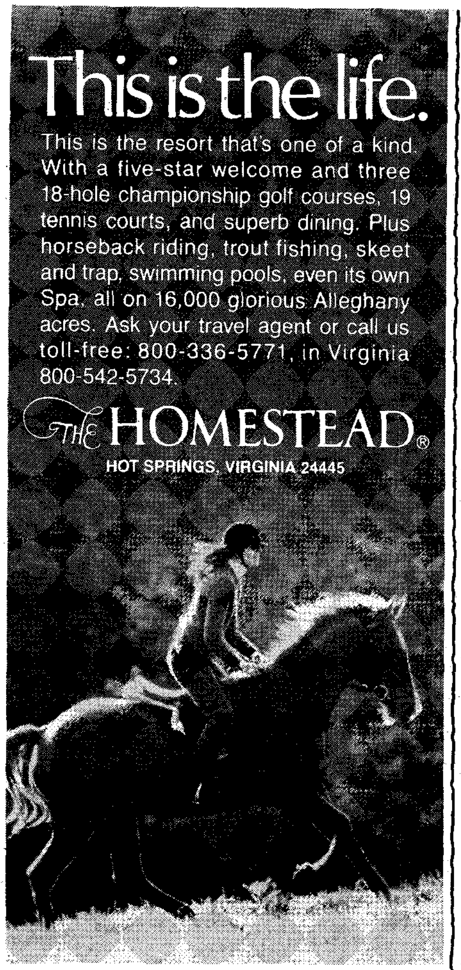

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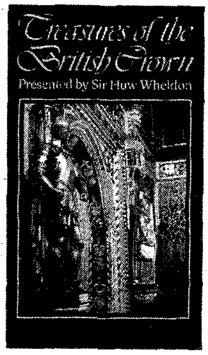
made of. Astronomers tried not to think about Zwicky's missing mass (one tried not to think about Zwicky at all)—until recently, when it became evident that the universe does indeed contain tremendous amounts of unseen mass. Today, astronomers call it the dark matter. They have no idea what it is, although they do know that it makes up as much as ninety per cent of the universe.

According to one astronomer who knew him, Zwicky seemed to fill up more space than he actually occupied, as if he himself contained missing mass. He fully occupied the little dome, slamming the eighteen-inch telescope around, putting dents in its tube while he looked for exploding stars. Walter Baade began to wonder what would happen if Zwicky went mad. What if he burst out of the little dome and came around to the Hale telescope one night looking for Walter Baade? Hands trembling, Baade whispered to colleagues that he believed that Zwicky was going to murder him.

Rumors of Walter Baade's pending murder got around. During dinners at the Monastery, Baade and Zwicky sat at opposite ends of the table, where they did not speak to each other and barely to anyone else. An astronomer named Milton Humason was often present at those dinners. Humason had begun his career as a janitor and a mule driver on Mount Wilson, and had been promoted to astronomer. After that, he had collaborated with Edwin Hubble on the discovery of the redshift of the galaxies, and thus of the expansion of the universe—one of the most important scientific discoveries of the century. He was a short, humble man, who wore a Chicago-style felt hat and a heavy coat that generally came equipped with a pint of Jack Daniels for extra protection against substellar cold. Humason had been around mules long enough to know where to draw the line. One night at dinner, Zwicky gave the final proof that he had gone mad: he said in a loud voice that a rocket ought to be fired at the moon in order to recover moon rocks for study. "Aw, Fritz!" Humason said. "Leave the goddam moon to the lovers!"

Walter Baade retired to Germany in 1958, and died there two years later, of natural causes. Fritz Zwicky continued to work at Caltech into the nineteen-seventies. He ended up in a basement office in the Robinson Building, down among the astronomy graduate students. Watching them pass by



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his office, every once in a while Zwicky would roar out, "Who in the hell are you?" He died in 1974. The asteroids Zwicky and Baade drift in the main belt today and are not likely to collide with each other anytime soon.

THE weather that week continued clear and windless. One night, the Shoemakers decided to take a break for coffee and apples. They walked over to the dome slit and looked at the sky. The stars were needle-sharp.

"Andromeda galaxy's up," Gene said. "Right at the top of the sky."

"I can never find it, Gene."

They both leaned out of the dome slit, silhouetted against the Milky Way. "Look at the Horn of Plenty," he said.

"Got it."

"See the mouth of the Horn?"

"Sure."

"Two stars near the end. Now go up from those two stars—"

"Which way?"

"That way," he said. "See a diffuse patch? Andromeda galaxy's enormous." He turned around and propped his elbows on the ledge of the dome and bit into his apple. "What a beauty of a night," he said.

"Gene, we need a pipeline to God, to tell us where the asteroids are," Carolyn said.

ON the morning of June 30, 1908, a fireball passed over Siberia, making "even the light of the sun appear dark," according to a witness. In the minutes that followed, a brilliant mushroom cloud boiled up into the stratosphere above the valley of the Middle Tunguska River. Fifty miles from ground zero, a shock wave picked up a tent full of Evenkian nomads and tossed it like a purse through the air. A man sitting on a porch at the Vanovara trading station, seventy miles from ground zero, experienced a bath of radiant heat, followed by a shock wave that plucked him from the porch and threw him several yards through the air, knocking him senseless. The blast incinerated and flattened forests over hundreds of square miles, and the roar broke windows and crockery up to six hundred miles away. A pressure wave travelled twice around the earth. The following night, the sky glowed so brightly over Europe that a person in London could read a newspaper outdoors at midnight; and the cause of it all was the impact of a comet or an Apollo asteroid about two hundred feet in diameter.

One afternoon in 1912, in Holbrook, Arizona, the section boss of the Santa Fe railroad and his family were eating dinner. They heard a "terrific crash." One of the boys ran outside. He said, "It's raining rocks out here!" His father went out. As they looked, the entire plain for a mile eastward filled with puffs that reminded them of bullets "kicking up dust." Fourteen thousand meteorites landed.

In Johnstown, Colorado, on July 6, 1924, a funeral was taking place in the graveyard behind the little Elwell church, when there came a sound like machine-gun fire, and then a *thwock* as a football-size meteorite hit a nearby road. Mr. Clingenpeel, the undertaker, dug it up.

On April 28, 1927, in Aba, Japan, Mrs. Kuriyama's five-year-old daughter was playing in the garden when she cried out. She had been struck on the head by a meteorite the size of a mung bean, which her mother found resting on her neckband. This stone now sits in a museum in Japan. It is called the Aba.

An Air Force pilot flying at high altitude over Alabama on November 30, 1954, saw a bright light, like a falling star, heading in the general direction of the town of Sylacauga. Meanwhile, in Sylacauga, across the street from the Comet Drive-In Theatre, Mrs. E. Hulitt Hodges had just fallen asleep on her couch, when a loud noise woke her up. She jumped to her feet. At first, she thought that the gas heater had exploded. Then she felt a pain in her side. The falling star had punctured her roof, bounced off her radio, and bruised her viciously on the hip. Now lying insolently on her rug was the Sylacauga—eight and a half pounds of hypersthene stone, fresh from out beyond Mars.

On August 10, 1972, something came in from space over Utah. For two minutes, it moved northward over Idaho and Montana, going at least Mach 20. It may have skipped off the atmosphere over Canada or, as Gene Shoemaker suspects, it may have coasted to a relatively gentle impact somewhere in the Canadian forest. Mr. James Baker, vacationing at Jackson Lake, Wyoming, took an extraordinary photograph of it. In the picture, his wife is standing on a dock. She is obviously startled. She is looking toward the Grand Tetons, where, high over the peaks, a fireball is leaving a ruler-straight trail through the upper atmosphere. This was al-

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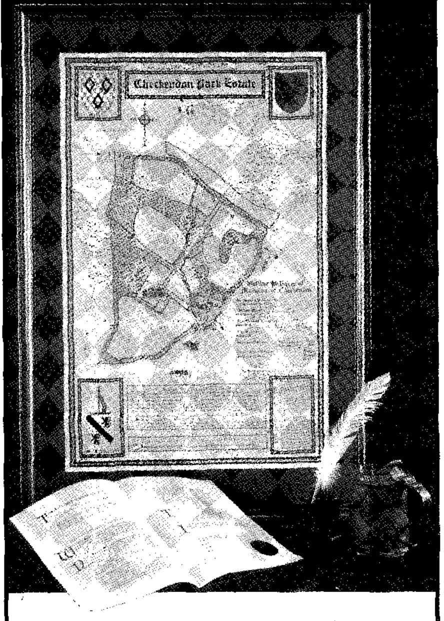

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most certainly an Apollo object, overtaking the earth from behind. It was probably made of metal and somewhat bigger than a diesel locomotive. Had it come in at a steeper angle, Mr. Baker might have photographed a two-kiloton mushroom cloud boiling abaft the Tetons.

Gene and Carolyn Shoemaker are cosmic weather forecasters. The chance of rocks, they report, is a hundred per cent. The smaller objects tend to vaporize in the upper atmosphere, but in doing so they can sometimes release the heat and shock of an atomic bomb. Gene estimates that about once a year a meteoroid explodes in the upper atmosphere, in a Hiroshima-force "event," as he likes to call such an occurrence. Since water covers two-thirds of the earth, many airbursts happen unwitnessed over the sea. Every twenty-five years, perchance, there might be an event that nudged a megaton—the power of a hydrogen bomb. An event like the Tunguska blast will occur roughly once every three centuries. Gene gives between five- and twenty-per-cent odds that an impact twice as powerful as Tunguska will occur during the next seventy-five years.

What if Carolyn actually found an object heading straight for the earth?

"If it were heading right *at* us, it wouldn't appear to move," Carolyn said, from the control desk. "So I might not notice it in the films. It would look like a star—until it was on top of us, when it would suddenly appear to move very fast. But by then it might be too late to tell anyone."

Gene dragged a stool under the telescope and contorted himself in order to fit into the tight space. "Naw, this isn't going to work," he said. He kicked the stool aside and sat on the floor. "This is a terrible angle," he said, peering into the guide scope. "Suppose that a twelve-megaton airburst went off over a politically unstable region," he said. "Suppose it happened over Pakistan, and suppose Pakistan had the bomb. The heat, the light, getting knocked on your fanny by the shock wave—a large number of people would swear they had been nuked. The political leadership might say, 'Oh, those S.O.B.s! They've nuked us!' And respond with a real nuclear attack on someone else."

Over geologic time, sooner or later, there will come to pass what Gene likes to call a "major event," to distinguish it from an event. Major events happen roughly once every hundred

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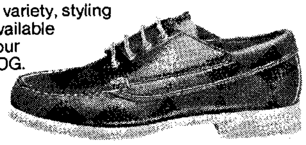

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thousand years. Two-thirds of the asteroids land in the sea. If the Tunguska horror had been made by an object the size of a small office building, then a responsible scientist must consider what might happen if a projectile half a mile wide clobbered the earth. Gene knew what would happen: a mountain coming in vertically would punch through the atmosphere in one second. "A bow wave in front of it opens a hole in the atmosphere, and the atmosphere burns, making nitrogen oxides," he said. He pointed a flashlight at the base of the telescope and fiddled with some parts. "I'm ready," he told Carolyn.

She counted down. He started an exposure looking to the west: the Trojans were now setting, and dawn was approaching. When a giant asteroid moving at nine miles per second hits the ground, he explained, a compressional wave rips through the asteroid, transforming it into a liquescent mass that tries to splash but turns into a fireball. The rocks beneath it compress to one-third their normal size, and a tremendous flash of light floods out of ground zero. "The radiant heat would set buildings on fire a hundred kilometres away," he said. If the asteroid hit in mid-Atlantic, the spreading tsunamis would obliterate many cities on the ocean's rim.

The impact of an asteroid a mile and a half across would squeeze out a ring of crushed, molten, and vaporized rock known as the cone of ejecta. The leading edge of the cone of ejecta expands at hypersonic velocity upward into the atmosphere, like a blossoming flower. It superheats the atmosphere into a bubble of gas mixed with molten and vaporized rock. The bubble bursts through the top of the atmosphere into outer space, and the vaporized rock condenses into droplets of glass, which keep on going. Thumb-size pieces of glass would soar on ballistic suborbital trajectories halfway around the earth, to reënter the atmosphere at a zone of convergence opposite the point of impact, causing firestorms of hot glass to rain down over a region the size of Australia. The blast might inject enough dust into the atmosphere to blot out the sun over the entire planet, and perhaps cause a temporary winter. Nitrogen oxides (the burned atmosphere) would turn into nitric-acid rains. Gene suspects that during the last million years a spike of powerful impacts has occurred—as many as thirty major events, including perhaps

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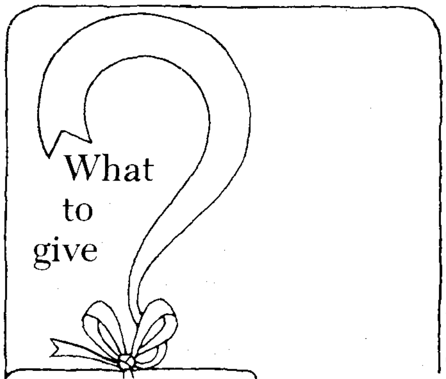

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ten continental impacts. This suggests the possibility that our species came of age during a mild comet shower. *Homo sapiens*, then, has already survived several natural versions of nuclear war—with the important difference that impact holocausts do not leave radioactive fallout in their wakes.

There are asteroids a good deal wider than a mile and a half travelling on earth-crossing orbits. Sisyphus and Hephaistos, two Apollo objects, are each about six miles in diameter. Either could hit the earth. If either did, the result would be what Gene calls a "global catastrophe." The first strong evidence that life on earth may have endured a global catastrophe came in 1980, when Luis and Walter Alvarez, of the University of California at Berkeley, and co-workers of theirs analyzed an unusual layer of grayish and reddish claystone found near the medieval town of Gubbio, Italy. This claystone, less than an inch thick, marks a sharp boundary between beds of rocks below it containing fossils from the Cretaceous period, the age of dinosaurs, and rocks above it containing fossils from the Tertiary period, the age of mammals. The claystone layer is sixty-five million years old. It contains abnormally large amounts of rare metals, such as iridium, that are found in much higher abundance in meteorites than in crustal rocks on the earth. The layer has since been collected from more than seventy sites all over the earth, including the ocean basins. The Alvarez group proposed that the impact of an asteroid roughly six miles across had thrown up enough dust to cause a global impact winter, which lasted for months or years, halting photosynthesis in plants. At roughly the same time, at least half of the species on earth—both plants and animals—vanished. "If you put that thin layer of clay up in the atmosphere as dust, it wouldn't let in any more light than a slab of wet clay half an inch thick," Gene remarked. "The only light at the surface of the earth would have been from luminescent organisms and from fires." Darkness would have triggered the death of much single-celled life in the sea, dynamiting the pyramid of life at its base, causing mass extinctions to ripple upward.

Gene's style as a scientist is to consider the possibilities. When he encounters a promising idea, he feels obliged to sample it. By no means has he ruled out the possibility of an in-

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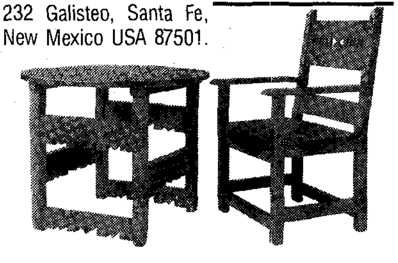

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tense comet shower as the cause of the Cretaceous Extinction. Perhaps a star had passed through the Oort cloud of comets. The Oort cloud would have gone berserk, throwing comets in all directions, some of which would have poured through the solar system, hitting the earth once in a while, causing stepped or staggered mass extinctions. Biological evolution, it seems, has consisted of periods of stability followed by abrupt developments. After a mass extinction, surviving organisms would branch out, evolving into new forms of life. The evolution of the mammals was one such explosion. The extinction of the dinosaurs might have been heralded by a star shining during the day—a star passing through the Oort cloud—and by an unusual number of comets hanging in the dawns and sunsets, year after year. If an asteroid had hit the earth, there would have been no warning at all, except the presence of Jupiter in the sky, serene and delicious, and, as always, raking the asteroid belt. If it were not for Jupiter, perhaps, the dinosaurs might have become slim creatures examining quasars with mirrors, while today we would be balls of fur with saucer eyes, chewing insects and howling at the night.

"WE'LL put you to work," Carolyn said to me, toward the end of the week.

"What are we doing?" Gene asked, from under the telescope.

"I'm going to teach him how to change film."

"Good."

She said to me, "Watch Gene's time."

The red numbers on the digital clock hurried along, dividing time into tenths of a second.

"God damn you!" Gene said to the Schmidt, not to me, and the Schmidt answered him with a flash of sparks. I heard *zeee, zeee* while he got the cross-hairs back on his star. He closed the shutters and rotated the telescope. After some clanking in the dark, he gave me a film holder containing an exposed disk of film. I gave him the fresh film holder. Next, I had to run to the control desk.

"While Gene is slewing the telescope, you read off the coördinates of his next exposure," Carolyn said. "Hit the buttons to rotate the dome. Hand him his control paddle. Write down the time, the temperature, the name of the observer, and the relative humidity. Then go downstairs to the darkroom, holding the exposed film holder tight against your chest." She took me down to the darkroom. "Changing film is quite easy," she said, switching off the lights. "Turn over the film holder and shake it. The film drops into your left hand. Do you feel it? Hold it by the edge. A fingerprint could obscure a comet." She told me to run my hand along the darkroom counter until I found a drawer. The drawer held a lightproof box and a stash of exposed films—the entire night's work. I had to put my film in the box, close the box and the drawer, and load a new film into the film holder, writing the number of the exposure on the film with a pencil. All in total darkness. "Now scurry upstairs," she said. "I say scurry because by now the observer—"

"What are you guys doing?" came faintly down the stairs, right on cue.

"Assure the observer that everything's going fine. *Everything's going fine, Gene!* It's like learning how to fly."

On my first solo, I disappeared into the darkroom with a film holder clutched against my chest. I was gone for a long time, leaving Gene stranded on the telescope.

"Hurry up!" the Shoemakers called.

The Shoemakers heard a loud boom in the darkroom. The night assistant had crashed on takeoff, having walked into a wall.

"Everything's going fine!" I shouted. I had accidentally switched on some blue lights, which I was afraid would expose the film, until I realized that the blue lights were inside my head. I staggered upstairs with a fresh film holder.

"Try to hold it against your chest," Carolyn reminded me.

"O.K.," I said.

"Did you leave the lights out?"

"Yes."

"Did you write down the number on the film?"

"What number?"

"The number of the exposure."

"Uh-oh." I ran downstairs to write the number on the film.

When rotating the dome, the night assistant failed to note the difference between left and right. He could not locate the "Stop" button, causing the dome to spin out of control. The night assistant read aloud a wrong coördinate, causing the observer to search San Diego for minor planets. The night assistant whanged a table with his head. Sounding a note of optimism, Gene's voice came from under the

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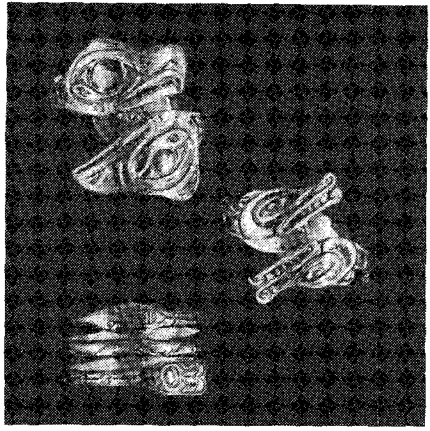

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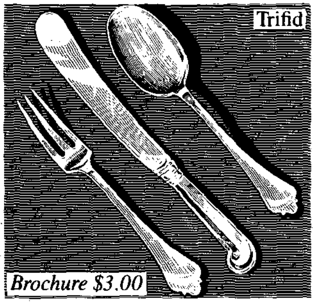

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telescope: "Things are shaking down after a bumpy start."

By the end of the run, the Shoemakers had exposed a hundred and forty-four pairs of photographs, and Gene had developed them and hung them on lines to dry. "I just know there are Trojans in these fields," he said. "But Carolyn's got to find them." He and Carolyn put the films in glassine bags. The bags went into a box, and the box went into the trunk of the Fury. That evening, we drank a small glass of white wine as a toast to the success of planet-hunting, and the Shoemakers pointed the Fury at Flagstaff by the light of a waxing moon that told the end of October dark time.

TROJAN planets are slow-moving, predictable bodies. Once you have sighted one, you can usually find it later. Carolyn Shoemaker was in no hurry to search the films that resulted from the Trojan run on Palomar Mountain. In November, she and Gene returned to Palomar for another week, to photograph the tail end of the cloud. Then, after the new year, they went back to survey the sky for earth-crossing asteroids, while the Trojan films remained in their glassine bags in Flagstaff, unsearched for Trojan planets.

On that run, Carolyn found the first new comet of 1986. It turned out to be a regular visitor to the inner solar system—Periodic Comet Shoemaker 3. Then she found the second comet of 1986. This one, designated 1986b, was a long-period comet. It took a hairpin turn around the sun and left the inner solar system; it will be back in the spring of 2509. "I am now tied with Caroline Herschel," Carolyn said. "Of course, I am going to beat her." (Last spring, she did, when she found 1987o, a large, dim, slow-moving comet beyond Jupiter.)

When Carolyn got around to searching the films for Trojans, in the fall of 1986, she found four new ones. Each was about fifty to eighty miles in diameter—bigger than many of Jupiter's moons. Her rate of discovery, Gene feels, supports his contention that the Trojan clouds contain much more material than is generally supposed. Carolyn's new Trojans are provisionally named 1985 TE3, TF3, TG3, and TL3. They will eventually get names from the Iliad—minor troops from the Greek side of the war, since all the heroes have been taken.

On May 5, 1986, on Palomar Mountain, Carolyn found a strange

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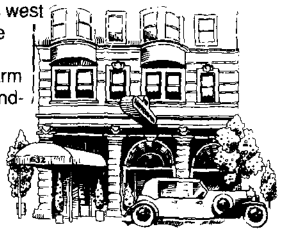

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minor planet in a pair of films that she and Gene had taken a few days before—an asteroid moving slowly and going the wrong way, against the flow of the main belt. She telephoned Brian Marsden at the Minor Planet Center and gave him a set of rough coördinates. He gave the asteroid a temporary name: 1986 JK. The Shoemakers took more photographs of 1986 JK on following nights and continued to report the object's changing positions to the Minor Planet Center. On May 13th, Brian Marsden informed the Shoemakers and the rest of the world (via international telex) that "1986 JK appears to be an Apollo object approaching the earth." Astronomers rushed for their telescopes. The asteroid's slow motion was an illusion: the Shoemakers had been watching it head toward the earth. JK reversed its apparent motion, seemed to accelerate wildly, and passed the earth on June 1st, at a distance of two million six hundred thousand miles—one of the closest asteroidal misses on record. By the standards of normal planetary motions in the solar system, the apparition of 1986 JK was somewhat akin to having the hair on one's head parted by a bullet from a .30-30 rifle. JK was travelling on a long ellipse, like the orbit of a comet. It was a faint object, and seemed to be tiny, but when radio astronomers using a dish antenna at the Goldstone station of NASA's Deep-Space Network bounced a radar signal off it as it went by, they received a clear echo, which suggests that JK is several miles across and faint only because it is as black as a piece of charcoal. It is an Apollo object, a Mars-crosser, and a Jupiter-crosser: it could make a hole in Mars or the earth, or it could vanish into the storms of Jupiter. At intervals of fourteen years, marking time like a metronome, it ticks past the earth. Around Independence Day in the year 2000, it will be back in our skies.

—RICHARD PRESTON

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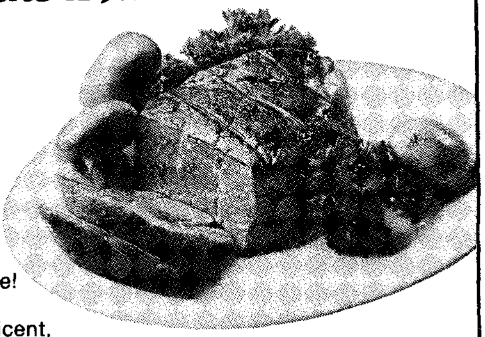
[*From the Police Log in the Dover–New Philadelphia (Ohio) Times-Reporter*]

Deputies were called to the home of a 70-year-old Brightwood man Friday afternoon when a neighbor reported he feared the man was dead because he wouldn't move from his couch despite repeated knocking. Deputies said they found nothing wrong with the man, who told them he deliberately ignored his neighbor because "I have a cold six-pack of beer in my refrigerator and he knows it."



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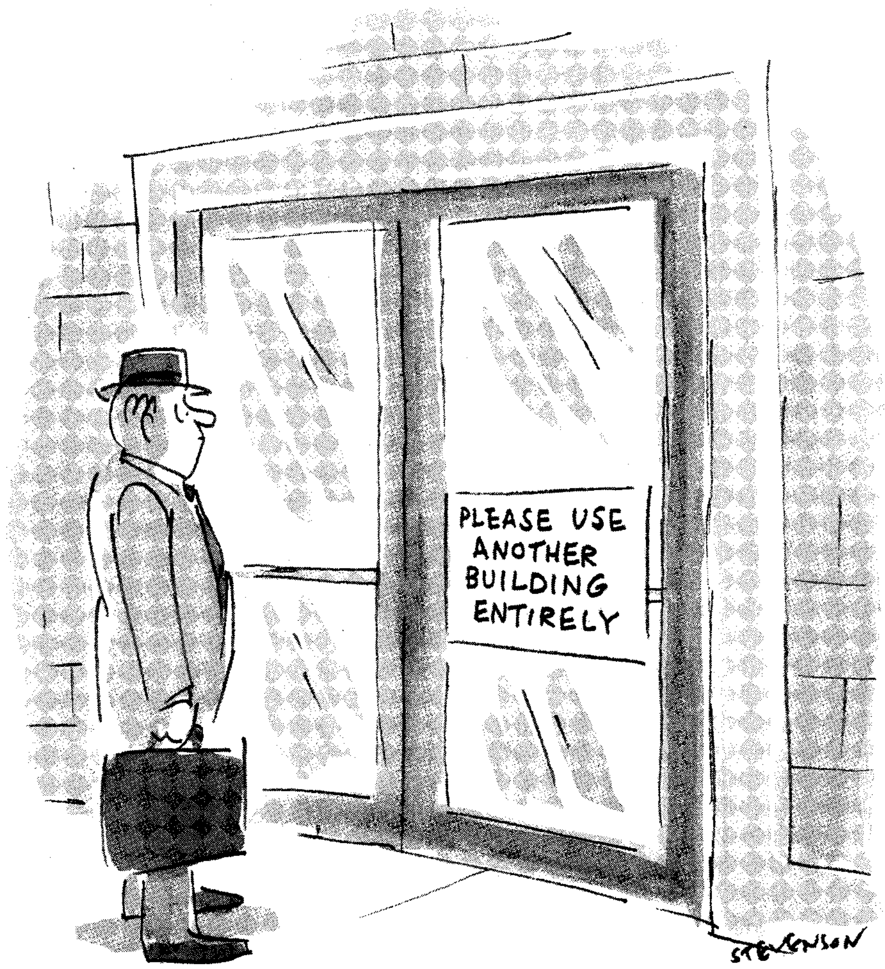
LAUGHTER IN THE BALKANS

UNTIL late last year, whenever I thought about Bulgaria or Bulgarians—and that wasn't often—this is what usually came to mind: From a memorable college history course, I recalled that the vicious little Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 had set the stage for the First World War. Bulgaria, a backward, luckless Balkan state, had got the short end. It gave up most of the territory it had won from the Turks, and it firmly allied itself with the losing side—not only in the First World War but in the Second as well. And I knew that since 1944, when the Russians marched in and the Germans marched out, Bulgaria had been a steadfast member of the Soviet bloc, rarely wavering in its loyalty to Stalinist Communism. The Bulgarian secret police were every bit as ruthless as the K.G.B., and they had been implicated in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II, in 1981, through their alleged training and abetting of Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish terrorist. There had also been the notorious London "umbrella assassination" in 1978 of Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian exile and former crony of the Bulgarian political establishment who had broadcast embarrassing news of his homeland over the BBC; Markov was dispatched with a tiny poison pellet fired into his leg from a specially rigged umbrella. Then, too, I sometimes thought about an old college friend who was descended from Bulgarian aristocracy. He liked to amuse me with tales of pre-Communist Bulgaria. He said that life then had been easy and luxurious for the rich, harsh and devastating for the poor. One of his stories concerned his Bulgarian nanny, who looked after him during family trips to the old country between the world wars. She received four leva a day in wages; my friend's favorite childhood confection there—a teaspoonful of sugar paste and a glass of water—cost five leva in the chic cafés. And as a longtime pipe smoker I occasionally would try a tin of Balkan Sobranie tobacco—a strong, heady smoke that can become cloying after a while.

Certainly none of this patchy intelligence hinted at a people who especially prized humor, so when I received an invitation to attend something called the Eighth International Biennial of Humor and Satire in the Arts, from the House of Humor and Satire, in Gabrovo, Bulgaria (whose motto is "The world lasts because it laughs"), I thought that the invitation itself was an elaborate joke—and not a very funny one. After a second reading, however, it seemed to be on the level, so I checked with the Embassy of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, and discovered that it was indeed on the level. There really was going to be a biennial humor festival in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, in the spring of 1987—and the *eighth* one, at that. I decided to attend.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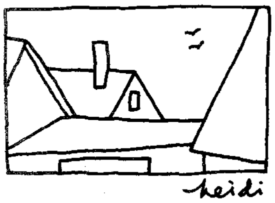
STEVENSON

In the ensuing months, I read a lot about Bulgaria. I learned that it is almost the size of Pennsylvania, with a population of about nine million—nearly the population of Michigan—most of whom are Slavic and Turkic-Bulgar in origin, and whose language, Bulgarian, is about as close to Russian as English is to German. Because of recent industrialization (Bulgaria hopes to become the "Japan of the Balkans"), many peasants are leaving the villages for the cities—especially Sofia, the capital. However, agriculture is still a big part of the economy, with grain, tobacco, fruits, wine, and vegetables heading the list. Bulgaria claims a nationhood going back thirteen centuries, its medieval czarist empires once flourishing from the Black Sea to the Adriatic and the Aegean. Later, Bulgaria fell under the Turkish yoke—five hundred years of oppressive Ottoman rule, which ended in 1878, when Russia helped the Bulgarians oust the Turks. The Bulgarian bitterness toward Turkey is still palpable, as is the gratitude toward Russia. Of all the Soviet-bloc nations, only Bulgaria has got along with Russia like a good, obedient son with a demanding father. Todor Zhivkov, the seventy-six-year-old Chairman of the State Council and General Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party, has been governing the country with a heavy hand since 1954—which makes him the most durable Red leader in the world. He is fond of saying that "the Soviet Union and Bulgaria breathe with the same lungs, and the same blood flows through our veins." Few, if any, Bulgarians argue with him.

To complete my homework, I took advantage of a visit to the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington, where I picked up my visa, to talk with some informed sources. The Embassy building, just off Massachusetts Avenue, is a dingy, forbidding place, but Simeon Darpatov, the Embassy's press and information officer, was cordial and forthcoming. Over small cups of strong coffee in a cheerless reception room, he spoke glowingly of his native land. "You will see for yourself what a friendly, beautiful country Bulgaria is," he told me. "In May, when you go there, it is very green and pleasant. There are many international tourists, and you will feel at ease. I will arrange with the Sofia Press Agency for your credentials and interpreter. You will see for yourself that Bulgaria is hospitable to foreigners, not like what Western press says. We fully support *glasnost* movement."



I asked Darpatov about Gabrovo and the humor festival, and the mere mention of the city brought a smile to his face.

"Ah, *Gab*rovo," he said, gently correcting my mispronunciation; I had put the accent on the second syllable. "It is special place with special sense of humor. The Gabrovonians go back many centuries as skilled craftsmen who know how to save their money. They are like the Scotch of Aberdeen, which is sister city. The symbol of Gabrovo is cat without a tail. In winter, you do not hold door open too long to let in cold when you let in cat without a tail. That is Gabrovo humor—they make fun of their own thriftiness, and all Bulgarians make fun of Gabrovo. At House of Humor and Satire, there is statue of Hitar Petar, which means clever, shrewd Peter. Hitar Petar is ordinary peasant man who wears *galpak*, a hat of animal skin, and rides backward on a donkey. He is folk hero, going back maybe one hundred and fifty years, and is big symbol of national survival by outwitting Turks and other oppressors. You will see that Bulgarians have wonderful sense of humor, even about unpleasant things." He presented me with an armful of brochures, which included a collection of Gabrovo anecdotes, put together by the festival's director, Stefan Furtounov.

The next day, I paid a call on a friend at the State Department who was well acquainted with the Balkans. He told me that Bulgaria was still very much a closed, repressive society, controlled by a Stalinist "mafia." The Bulgarians will never rise up against the Soviets, as the Poles, the Czechs, the East Germans, and the Hungarians did, he said. They don't understand such dissent. It is not in their national character to speak out against authority. He warned me that the Dazjavna Sigurnost, the state security police, would tail me and bug my hotel room and tap my phone, and that the Sofia Press Agency was essentially a governmental operation for keeping an eye on foreign journalists. If I was assigned an interpreter, he or she would probably be a security agent. "Expect to be watched and overheard everywhere."

The expert went on to say that the notes, films, and tapes of journalists were sometimes confiscated before they left the country, but that since Bulgaria was trying hard to improve its reputation in the West, in order to attract more hard currency, its security people might go easy on me. The country's dismal reputation is a result of its embarrassing link to Mehmet Ali Agca (whether or not the Bulgarians trained him as a papal assassin or just as an anti-Turkish terrorist), its old reputation as a backward peasant land, the Georgi Markov assassination in London, drugs and arms smuggling ("They do the Russians' dirty work"), and the violent Bulgarianization of the ethnic Turks and other minorities. "The government wants everyone to be Bulgarian by decree, although that sort of thing has never worked in the Balkans," the expert said. "There are no basic human rights or freedoms in Bulgaria. That is one reason why the United States has not extended most-favored-nation status to Bulgaria, as it has to Poland and Rumania, for instance."

As for Gabrovo, he continued, "It's the Cleveland of Bulgaria—the source of national jokes. The humor festival is fairly propagandistic, with anti-U.S. Uncle Sam caricatures and the like—mostly for Third World and Soviet-bloc consumption. They're probably trying to open up the festival to the West, which is why you got an invitation. By the way, don't miss the Valley of Roses when you drive to Gabrovo. The Bulgarians produce most of the

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world's rose attar for perfume there. It would be a good idea to check in with our Embassy first thing when you get to Sofia. I'll let them know you're coming. Be careful."

THUS educated and forewarned, I left for Bulgaria with a sense of both adventure and anxiety. A friend who earlier had asked me "Can you get there from here?" turned out to be not entirely facetious. It isn't easy to get to Sofia from New York. The best route that my travel agent could devise was from New York to Paris, and then, by Air France, to Sofia via Bucharest. What with meticulous security checks at Orly and an unexpected demand for a French transit visa, I barely made the connecting Air France flight. I saw grim omens in all this.

My fellow-passengers on the Air France flight didn't do anything to dispel the omens—a dour lot of Balkans, loaded down with plastic bags of duty-free items and looking anything but thrilled about returning home. About half their number deplaned during a tense stopover at the shoddy Bucharest airport, and then, forty minutes later, we were descending into Sofia.

Modern, spruce, with well-paved runways, the international airport at Sofia was a decent example of a European capital-city airport, East or West. Bulgaria was in far better shape than Rumania. Red-beret Zapasi soldiers were about, but they kept their distance. An armored personnel carrier was parked discreetly off the tarmac. Snowcapped mountains framed the scene. A clean bus with room to spare took us to the terminal, and we were directed to the baggage chutes. A large welcoming poster of Todor Zhivkov was the sole political intrusion. I claimed my bag and headed for passport control—a series of small, gated glass cubicles, through which passengers seemed to be passing with ease. When my turn came, however, a rather severe-looking mustached official perused me and my passport for several minutes. At last, he pushed a button that automatically shut gates at both ends of the cubicle and left his booth with my passport. It was warm and claustrophobic in there, and I began to perspire. I noticed that the wall behind me in the cubicle was mirrored and that a television camera was mounted on another wall. I tried to look unconcerned, for whoever was watching, but I fear that after ten minutes or so I failed. Then the mus-

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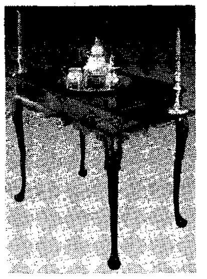

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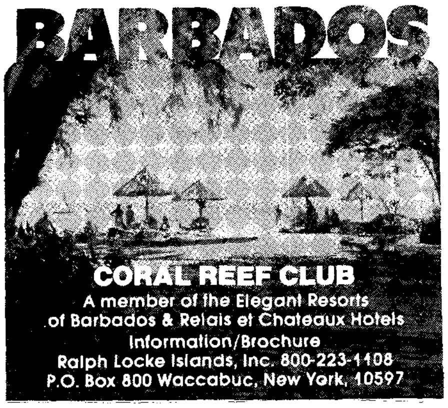

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tached man reappeared and, with a thin smile, handed me my passport and gestured for me to proceed. A gate swung open, and I went into the main room of the airport, where I enlisted a cabdriver to take me to downtown Sofia.

My hotel, the Sheraton Sofia, which incorporated the shell of the decaying but imposing Hotel Balkan, was a joint venture with the American hotel chain. (Other joint ventures were contracted with Japanese, German, French, Finnish, and Swedish firms; Bulgaria is economically and politically flexible when it comes to gaining hard currency and learning efficient techniques.) The hotel was managed by a Swiss, who maintained Western standards by training the Bulgarian personnel according to Swiss traditions and by being allowed to dismiss any errant employee on twenty-four hours' notice. The system appeared to be working: the pert desk clerk spoke perfect English ("I was born in the U.S., but it's a long story," she told me); my room, overlooking Lenin Square, was clean and well appointed; and the bellboy was solicitous. He initially refused a tip, as all good socialists should, but I persisted and he pocketed the money.

My first order of business was to telephone the Sofia Press Agency and inform my contact there that I had arrived. (The echo upon dialling—a giveaway that a phone is tapped—was absolutely thunderous.) Nobody answered, so I called the American Embassy to check in. A Marine guard said that the Embassy was closed that afternoon (it was a Wednesday), but he would take a message for Stephan Strain, the press and cultural-affairs officer, who would get in touch with me the next day.

That afternoon, I explored the hotel and its environs. Enclosed within the back courtyard of the hotel were partly reconstructed ruins of a fourth-century Church of St. George, the oldest preserved building in Sofia. Its rotunda and some adjacent ruins are national archeological treasures, but someone had nonetheless sprayed the graffito "VAN HALEN" on a nearby wall. That was the only dissident wall marking I saw in Bulgaria.

Noisy, bustling Lenin Square, in front of the hotel, was remarkable not for its gargantuan statue of a fatherly Lenin but for the dark presence of the Church of St. Nedelya, in its center. The church, which seemed to have no worshippers, also marked the center of Serdica, the Roman town built by Trajan over an ancient Thracian settlement. Also upstaging Lenin were a huge Central Department Store, the Banya Bashi Mosque, with a towering minaret, and the massive Sofia Synagogue. The mosque and the synagogue appeared as inactive as the Church of St. Nedelya. I had a native beer (strong and tart) at a sidewalk café and watched the passing scene as the sun went down behind the mountains: casual strollers, soldiers on leave, married couples wheeling prams, lounging teen-agers in tight jeans, purposeful men and women clutching attaché cases, children roller-skating, burly workers going home from factories, and the inevitable raucous German tourists. There was no armed presence of police or military to speak of—just people going about their lives in a controlled, sedate manner, the German tourists notwithstanding.

Back in my room, I switched on the television set to see if I could glean some news of the world. Two channels of Bulgarian TV and a Soviet channel were all that was available. News of the Iran-Contra hearings

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took up a lot of airtime, but the language barrier was impenetrable. The room's radio (four talk stations and one rock-rap station) also proved fruitless. The bathroom radio speaker could not be completely turned off, for some reason, and I found that a bit unsettling.

Since I had consumed five meals in the past twenty-four sleepless hours, I was not hungry, but I thought I'd try a bowl of kurban chorba, described on the room-service menu as a traditional Bulgarian beef soup. It arrived with good black bread, and it was a trifle oleaginous, but hearty and tasty. At eight o'clock, I went to sleep, awaking once to the faint sound of the bathroom radio speaker. I slept until eight the next morning.

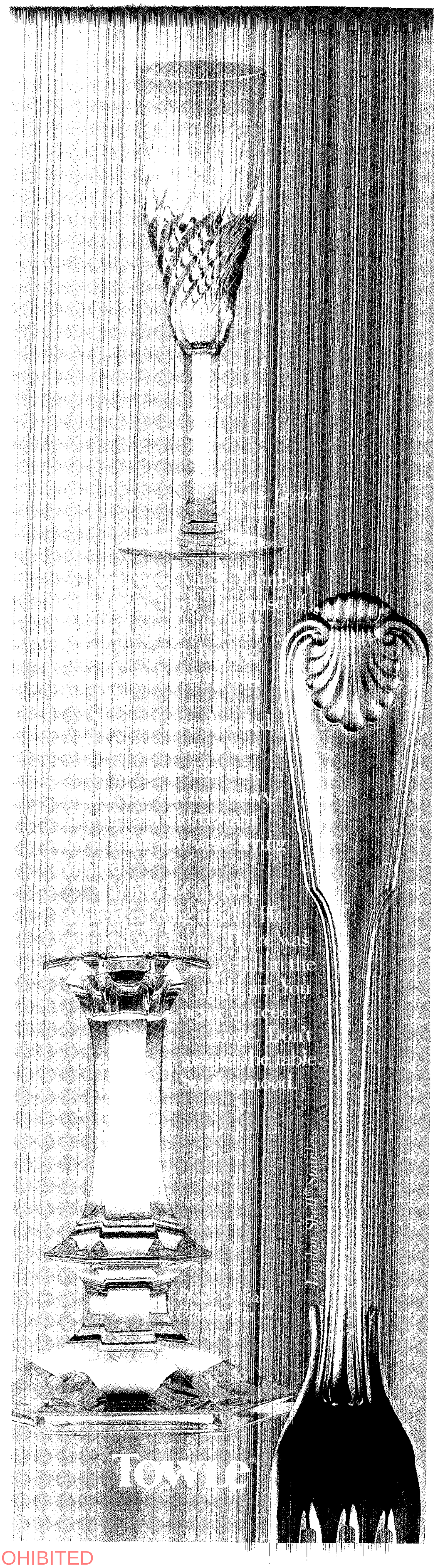
THE plangent trams in Lenin Square were bumper-to-bumper, hauling unsmiling Sofians off to schools, factories, and offices. I ordered a large Bulgarian breakfast, which included fried eggs, some unidentifiable meat, bread, cucumber salad, and a generous pot of coffee. Accompanying the breakfast was a complimentary copy of the Sofia *News*, an English-language weekly put out by the Sofia Press Agency. The lead story concerned Todor Zhivkov's recent state visit to China. More significant was a story reporting that Zhivkov had stopped off in Moscow on his way home and met with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, and had said afterward that the goals and principles of the radical changes taking place in both countries coincided. Almost identical photographs showing Zhivkov greeting Gorbachev and Zhivkov greeting Deng Xiaoping were prominent on page 1.

Other stories were heavily anti-American or anti-Turkish, gloating over the Iran-Contra hearings in America and over human-rights abuses and income disparities in Turkey. One article heatedly denied that the Bulgarian Secret Service planned to assassinate the Turkish President, Kenan Evren, as an allegedly recruited assassin had claimed. I was absorbed in an account of the misfortunes that had beset a Bulgarian world-champion weight lifter since he defected to the West, when the telephone rang. It was Stephan Strain, from the American Embassy. In a calm, professionally diplomatic voice he welcomed me to Sofia and suggested that we meet at the Embassy at two o'clock. Meanwhile, he would inform the Sofia Press Agency people that I had arrived. I thanked him for his help, feeling more secure about things.

My sense of security vanished, however, when I discovered that two rolls of unexposed Kodak color film were missing from my suitcase. They must have been taken the afternoon before when I left my room for a stroll. Was it a chambermaid heist or the Dazjavna Sigurnost's mistaking unexposed film for exposed negatives of key Bulgarian military installations? Whatever the case, I decided to report the theft to the hotel manager, who seemed sincerely embarrassed and said that he would investigate. Thereafter, whenever I left my bag in the room, I employed the old human-hair-in-the-zipper-tabs trick—which I had learned from practically every spy novel—and, sure enough, the hair was broken every time, but nothing more was filched.

With a few hours to kill, I did some sightseeing (my notebooks and other essentials in a tote bag, whose strap rarely left my shoulder), heading rather aimlessly toward Mt. Vitosha. Sofia appeared to be a city of distinct neighborhoods, each with a verdant park, a square with monuments, and buildings ranging from Stalinist functional to Viennese baroque. An extreme example of the former was the Lyudmila Zhivkova People's Palace of Culture, a stark black-and-white monolith resembling a nuclear power plant, which contained several halls for congresses, concerts, and exhibitions. It is named for Todor Zhivkov's daughter, who promoted nationalist culture with a vengeance—so vigorously, in fact, that in 1981, the rumor goes, she was poisoned by the Russians. The official reason for her death was a cerebral hemorrhage caused by an automobile accident. In any case, her father made certain that she would not be forgotten. Zhivkov himself just as certainly cannot be forgotten, no matter where one turns; his idealized image confronts one around every corner.

The people I passed seemed to be contained and reasonably well off. Stores appeared to be adequately stocked, and ordinary citizens buzzed about the streets in Russian Ladas and Moskviches and Czech Skodas. The traffic congestion and exhaust pollution were already a problem, after only thirty years of Bulgaria's modernization plans. Inland Sofia, with no physical barriers except Mt. Vitosha to hold it back, was expanding too



quickly for its own good, not unlike a hundred other cities around the world.

Back at my hotel room, I received an unexpected visit from Konstantin Adjarov, of the Sofia Press Agency. A spare, nervous, pale man, he reminded me somewhat of Woody Allen. Placing his cigarette case and a lighter on a table, he puffed on fumigatory indigenous cigarettes and told me he had dropped by to make sure that I had got an important message. "You see, the Sheraton was built by Americans and is run by Swiss but it is not always efficient for messages, so I come personally," he said. The message was that a meeting with Vulko Vulkov, Adjarov's superior at the agency, had been arranged for three-thirty that afternoon. The press agency was still looking for a suitable interpreter for my Gabrovo trip, he said, but, with luck, the interpreter would be present at the meeting, too. Since I had been warned that interpreters were often government security agents, I tried to sound him out about who the person might be.

"Maybe a girl" was all he told me.

We chatted circuitously about our national journalistic establishments, and then it was time for me to leave for my appointment with Stephan Strain.

The Embassy is just a few minutes' walk from the hotel, on Aleksandŭr Stamboliyski Boulevard—a street named for a peasant insurrectionist who seized power in 1918 and was later assassinated. The façade looked like the ones on either side except for an American flag, surveillance TV cameras, a booth housing a Bulgarian policeman, and department-store-size windows displaying examples of American life and fashions, which attracted a crowd of impassive pedestrians. I announced my intentions to an intercom microphone, and a thick door opened to reveal an anteroom. I was frisked and scanned with a metal detector by a civilian security man while a starched Marine guard watched. The civilian took charge of my pocketknife and my camera.

Stephan Strain appeared. An affable, heavyset man, he ushered me past a secretary and into a windowless private office, which, with a shortwave radio, steel combination safes, and imposing doors, seemed to me very secure—the epitome of the "safe room." Coffee was served, *à la bulgare*, by the secretary while Strain and I exchanged amenities. After she left, closing the door behind her, I brought

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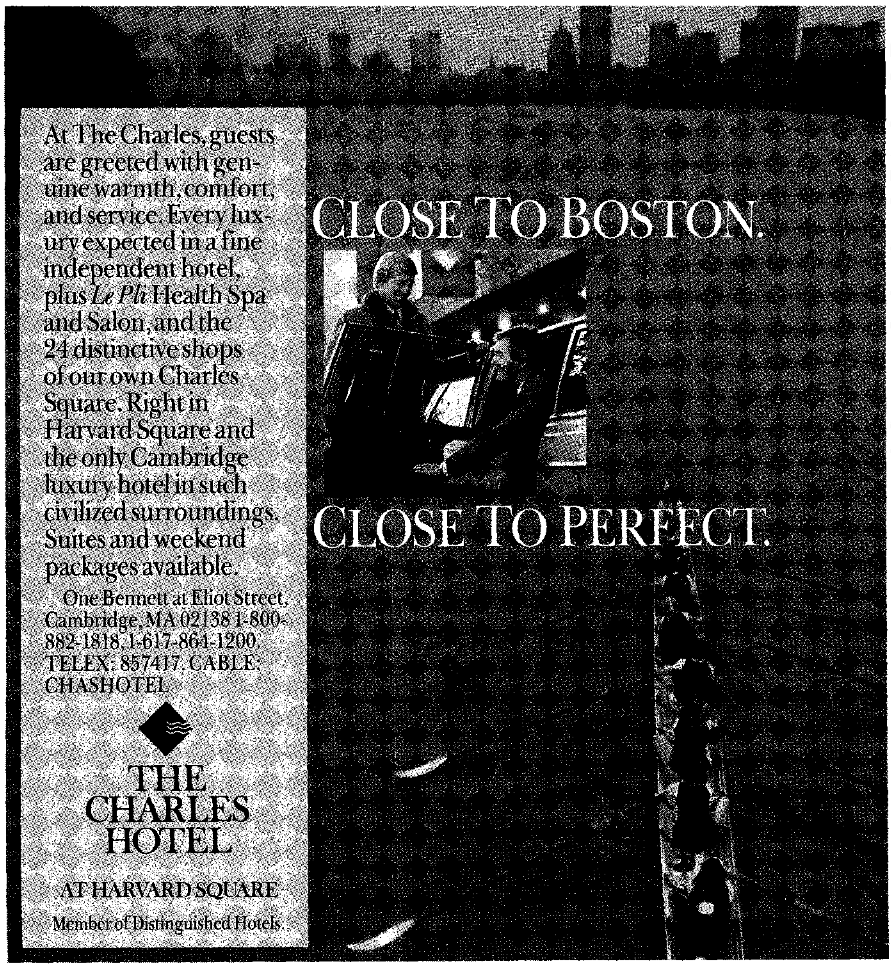

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up the disappearance of the two rolls of film from my suitcase. Strain's manner became stilted. This prompted me to point at the walls and then at my right ear. Strain nodded sagely. "We must assume," he said. So even *this* room might be bugged.

I reasoned that if we were being overheard electronically by some Bulgarian eavesdropper we might as well make his task harder. "Would I be given to surmise that my transient domicile is similarly accoutred?" I asked.

Again, Strain nodded.

"And my chartered automotive conveyance, and even unto my transient domicile in the hinterland?"

Another nod.

Then we discussed in noncircumlocutions some innocent subjects, such as how Strain had happened to be posted to Bulgaria. He said that he was born in the Bronx, graduated from Long Island University, and became a career foreign-service diplomat in 1970. He had served in Belgium and Finland before Bulgaria, and now he and his wife and children had been living in Sofia for three fairly happy years. The Embassy had a villa in the mountains for personnel rest and relaxation, which helped, he said. Soon he was due for home duty in Washington. There were other matters I wanted to ask him about, so we agreed to meet for a drink at five o'clock in the Sheraton lobby, which I presumed was not bugged.

THE building housing the Sofia Press Agency was not far away —just across the Sofia City Garden, a large park filled with fountains and shade trees and Sofians taking a break on benches. The oldest public park in the capital, it is surrounded by equally old ministry buildings, banks, and art galleries; the national theatre; a library; and, unfortunately, the hideous mausoleum of Georgi Dimitrov—the post-Second World War leader who was Bulgaria's Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, and Tito rolled into one, and who was once tried by the Germans for alleged complicity in the Reichstag fire of 1933. Bulgarians tend to have mixed feelings about Dimitrov; while he is honored as a "great son of the Bulgarian people" and a charismatic "national Communist," he played a part in the bloody purge of non-Communists right after the war.

I was met in the lobby of the press agency by Adjarov. "Good news!" he said. "We have a nice interpreter. She is upstairs with Vulko Vulkov. We will go up now." Up we went to a lounge, where I was introduced to Vulkov and to Iliana Atanassova, who, it turned out, was an assistant professor of English at Sofia University. With her mass of black hair, flashing Latin eyes, and shy mien, she hardly looked like a security-police spy, but you never know, I told myself. She was eager to make the trip to Gabrovo—a city she had often visited as a part-time tour guide, but never during the biennial festival—and when I remarked that I might want to drive on to Varna, on the Black Sea, she was delighted. My intention was to return to Sofia in five days, and that, she said, neatly coincided with her teaching schedule. Her English was perfect, embellished with a charming, if mysterious, British lilt. Over coffee, the four of us talked about the best route to Gabrovo, life in New York City (where Vulkov had worked for the Bulgarian Mission to the United Nations), and my impressions of their country so far. I said that I was surprised at how modern Sofia was.

"Ah, that is your American prejudice," Adjarov said.

"No, it's more my American ignorance," I replied.

Vulkov said, "We are like other peoples, and the world is small."

With that observation and the assurance that everything was arranged for me in Gabrovo, I thanked them all for their help and rose to leave. Iliana would meet me at the hotel at eleven o'clock the following morning. "We should be in Gabrovo by three in the afternoon," she said.

A SHORT time later, Strain and I were seated in the Sheraton lobby having drinks. He ordered mineral water ("Too many diplomatic parties," he said), and I had Bulgarian beer. The first thing I wanted to know, in these presumably bugless surroundings, was about the bugs at the Embassy. He said that things were particularly bad there, because of probe microphones in the walls from adjacent buildings. Thirty Bulgarian nationals were employed by the Embassy, and it was assumed that all thirty were possibly working for the state security services. The Marines had been having an especially difficult time of it since the Moscow scandal; the nonfraternization rules were very strict.

Talking freely, Strain answered my questions about the effect of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on Bul-

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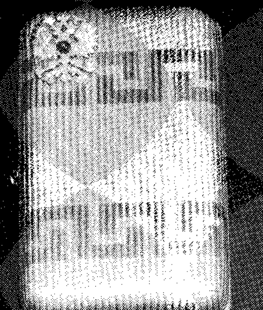

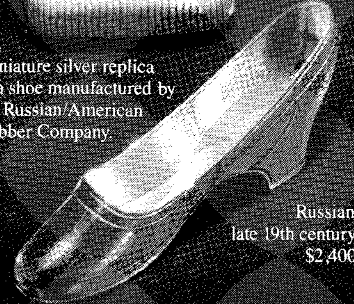

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garia ("Some fruits and vegetables were banned for a while, and the government checked pregnant women, but it's all supposed to be safe now"), the Bulgarians' lust for hard currency ("They're hoping to get the Winter Olympics here in 1994, and they're pushing tourism on all fronts"), Zhivkov's problems with Gorbachev over *glasnost*, involving Russian cutbacks of fuel below world-market prices for electricity generators ("There were unexplained power outages until recently"), Russian anger over the poor quality of Bulgarian goods sent to the Soviet Union compared with the quality of the goods sent to the West ("Russian tourists are envious, and they can't understand why Bulgaria has more and better things than the Soviet Union"), the Bulgarianization of minorities ("The Turkish problem is supposedly over"), and the Middle East ("Bulgaria is playing the field there, sending technicians to Libya and making money off everybody—they'll even recognize Israel if Russia does"). As for the rolls of film stolen from my suitcase, Strain said that foreigners' rooms were often searched, sometimes just to frighten the occupants, and most likely the film was lifted because good color film is hard to come by in Bulgaria.

As we talked, I noticed that a hefty man who had seated himself in a chair behind mine was reading a newspaper and seemed to be trying to listen to what we were saying. We decided to drink up and leave. Strain gave me his card—"with my home phone number, just in case." I said that I hoped I wouldn't need to bother him at home. He smiled and said, "Keep cool."

EVEN after a good night's sleep, I felt more confused than ever about Bulgaria: on the one hand, I had not expected to find so much efficiency or such obliging and friendly people in a developing Communist state; on the other hand, I was still rather nervous about the motives behind it all. For instance, was Iliana Atanassova—dutifully waiting in the lobby this hazy Friday morning while I finished packing—what she appeared to be (an intelligent young university teacher of English who picked up some extra income by interpreting) or was she something else (a security-police plant, perhaps, who would observe me closely and recommend that my notes, tapes, and film be confiscated before I left Bulgaria)?

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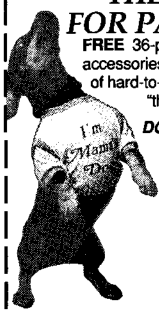

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DU-SAY'S

in my head, I met Iliana in the lobby, checked out of the hotel (no progress to report on the film theft, the manager said apologetically), and, in a rented Mercedes diesel-powered sedan, we hit the road for Gabrovo, two hundred and twenty kilometres to the east. Sofia was experiencing severe gridlock that morning, thanks to the closing of certain avenues because of a Council of Ministers meeting. Inching our way out of town, we were stalled for ten minutes near a large statue of the Russian Czar Alexander II. Iliana eased the wait by offering the information that although Alexander II was out of favor in his homeland his memory was revered in Bulgaria, since he was the czar who had presided over the ousting of the Turks. This prompted some tentative conversation about Russia, Bulgaria, and America—tentative because I suspected that the Mercedes might be bugged. That possibility didn't seem to concern her much.

Soon I felt relaxed enough to ask Iliana about her background. She told me that she came from a long line of Bulgarians of the professional class; she was the only child of a psychiatrist father and a teacher mother, who had recently retired as a professor of German at Sofia University. Iliana was thirty-one years old, she said, and was single and proud of it. "I am a Bulgarian Yuppie," she declared, and added that she was fortunate enough to have her own apartment, inherited from a devoted grandmother. She was as fluent in German and Russian as she was in English, and she had once studied, on an exchange grant, at Leeds University (which accounted for her slight British accent and her Stewart-plaid dress). "That was a wonderful experience for me, to travel to the West," she said. Once, when I explained an American colloquialism I had just used, she politely advised that such explanation was unnecessary. "I read everything American I can get my hands on—from Arthur Hailey to F. Scott Fitzgerald, who is my favorite. I also like Hemingway and Richard Wright."

We began to move along steadily through the industrial outskirts of Sofia, but soon the road narrowed to two lanes and we were stuck behind truck traffic. Bulgaria not only transports most of its own goods by truck but also provides the natural route for international trucking between Europe and Asia. The Eastern-bloc Ladas, Moskviches, and Skodas, with their fairly small engines, have a frustrating time

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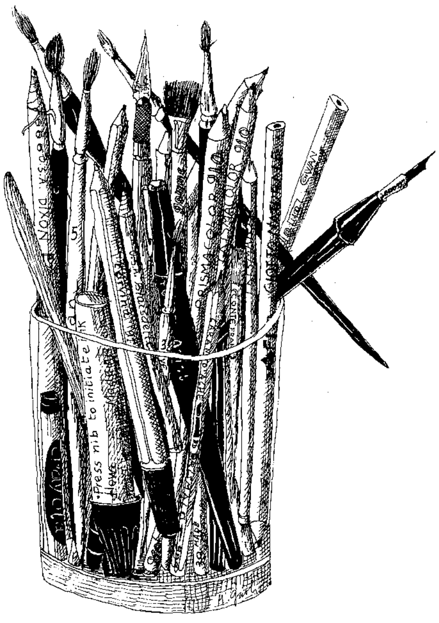
of it trying to pass the trucks, and the result is a lot of road accidents—a national problem. Iliana warned me to be careful, even with the more powerful Mercedes. The feared K.A.T., or transportation police, hide in speed traps with radar guns, and the penalties are severe not only for speeding (the usual highway limit is eighty kilometres an hour) but for reckless or drunk driving, and even for unfastened seat belts. I noticed that oncoming drivers flashed their headlights to warn of such traps, just as they do in the United States. "We are like other peoples, and the world is small," Vulko Vulkov had said the day before.

The traffic thinned a bit as we entered a broad, flat valley between the Stara Planina (Balkan Mountains), to the north, and the Sredna Gora (Central Range), to the south. Along the road was a paradoxical combination of smoke-belching industrial plants and picturesque Shubert-operetta scenes, like a shepherd, crook in hand, tending his flock. Maize, an esteemed Bulgarian food, was ripening on collective farms, and the collective peasants were working the green fields. Iliana told me that peasants could farm but not own small plots on the collectives, and sell the produce for their individual benefit. This makes for a topsy-turvy economy in which peasants often earn more money than skilled workers or technicians. Bartenders and waiters, too, do better than their more accomplished comrades, because of tips; there is a waiting list for such service jobs, and sometimes one must pay a bribe to get on it. The average monthly wage is only two hundred and fifty leva (about two hundred and thirty dollars), but, as Iliana reminded me, medical care and education are free, and prices are low, "except at places like the Sheraton."

The road curved gently through the foothills of the Balkan Mountains, and the air grew fresh and piney. Not far off now were the Balkan Mountains proper, their shaded vales filled with snow. Boiling thunderheads added to the dramatic panorama. The mountain air made us hungry, so we stopped for lunch at the first roadside restaurant we came to. All the tables were occupied, but Iliana thought nothing of asking three men at a table for six if we might join them—standard procedure in a socialist society. They made room and stared at us, wondering, I'm sure, who we were and what we were about. The only dish available was meatballs with cucumbers and something that approximated mashed potatoes, and this we gratefully consumed, washing it down with hot coffee. Outside, I noticed a stocky man in a gray suit leaning casually against a black Moskvich, apparently waiting for someone. It seemed to me he looked something like that man who might have been trying to eavesdrop on my conversation with Strain in the Sheraton lobby.

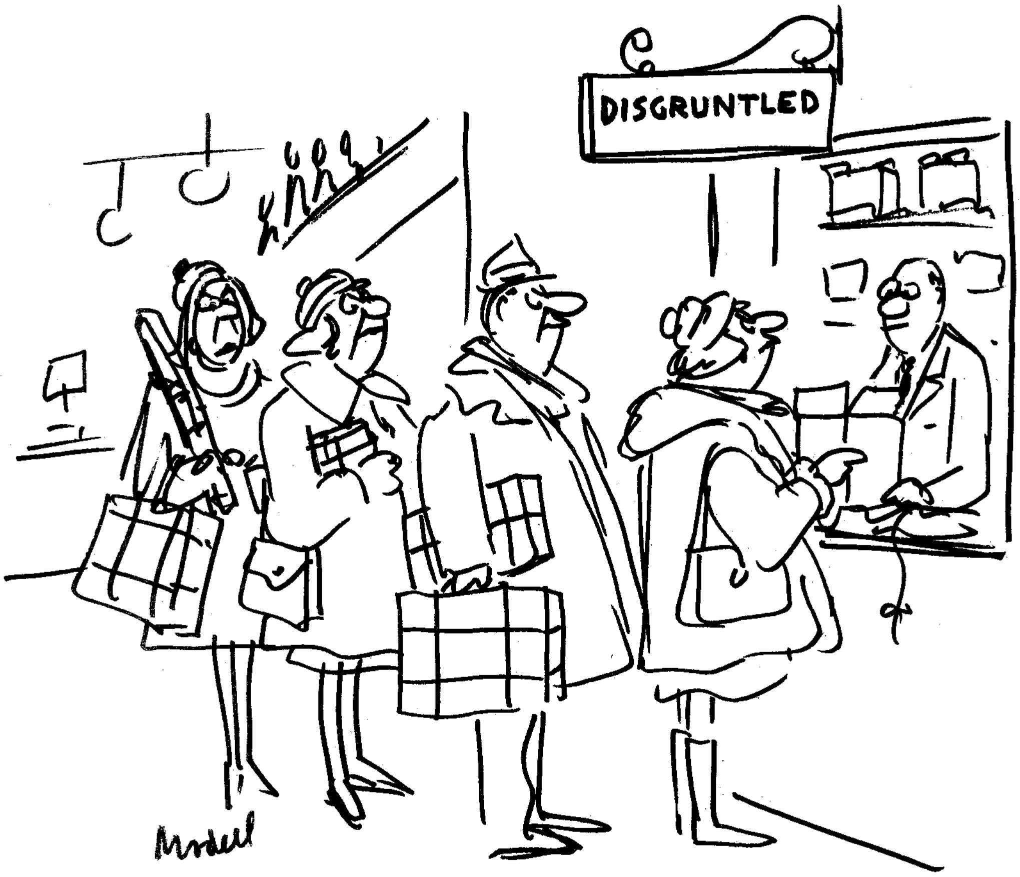
At Rozino, which means "rose village," we came to the beginning of the Valley of Roses, the plain where seventy per cent of the world's rose attar is grown and distilled. Iliana, with the encyclopedic spiel of a tour guide, told me that at least two thousand rose petals were hand-plucked to make just one gram of attar, which sells for half as much as a gram of gold to *parfumeurs*. It was far too late in the day for us to see the picking of the petals—that starts at four in the morning and ends at sunrise, when the attar quickly evaporates—and too early in the year for us to encounter the Festival of Roses on the first Sunday in June, when the locals, in native garb, celebrate the harvest for tourists. I was disappointed that the only aroma was the slight scent of lavender, which is also grown nearby. But the villages and towns along the route through the Valley of Roses were winsome vestiges of another era, the picture-postcard Bulgaria that my college friend liked to recall from his childhood trips there.

At Kazanlŭk, home of the Bulgarska Roza Combined Factories, where the attar is distilled, we turned north into the high mountains and headed for Gabrovo via the Shipka Pass—the almost holy national site of a crucial defeat of the Turks by Russian troops and Bulgarian irregulars in 1877. The historic event is marked by a gigantic square-based stone monument on top of Mt. Stoletov; on a nearby peak, a less Stalinist landmark, resembling a spaceship and gantry, commemorates the birthplace of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Both sites are magnets for organized bus tours of schoolchildren and workers. My private tour guide grew truly impassioned in describing the Shipka battle; despite a nonpolitical posture, she was clearly a patriot. Her verve for battle dissipated, however, when we passed a squashed animal on the road. "I can't stand seeing dead creatures," she said.



Up and up we climbed, crawling behind buses and trucks, and hemmed in by thick birch forests and steep rock faces. It was perfect guerrilla-fighting country, and, indeed, there were monuments here and there to partisans who died fighting the Nazis in the region. (On a drive through Bulgaria, one gets the impression after a while that there are as many monuments and statues as there are live people.) Then, in the late afternoon, we descended into the valley of the Yantra, a narrow river swirling around huge boulders, and before us was Gabrovo. The streets, lined with dilapidated huts, their lintels sagging under the weight of roofs made of loose flat stones, lent a fairyland quality to the place. It was as if we had happened on some Grimm Brothers theme park. What a spot for a festival of humor and satire! Still, I honestly didn't expect much. The idea of such a festival in Bulgaria continued to amuse me.

But the joke was on me. The Gabrovo festival was the real thing. I had rarely seen a more festive place. The center of town was full of people having fun with an abandon I had never imagined could exist east of the Iron Curtain. Long, bright banners emblazoned with the tailless cat of Gabrovo and advertising the festival in four languages flapped in the breeze. No posters or other representations of Todor Zhivkov were visible. At the House of Humor and Satire, where we picked up a Madison Avenue-style press kit of festival literature and our badges of accreditation, good nature fairly bubbled. Last-minute exhibits were being mounted, and finishing touches were being applied to a scrap-iron sculpture of Don Quixote,



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near statues of Hitar Petar and Charlie Chaplin. The House, which contains a theatre, a café, and a spacious museum dedicated to humorous art and literature, was itself both impressive and sort of comical, with a concave-convex amusement-park mirror as a lobby attraction. A babel of languages met the ear, and everybody seemed to be enjoying the company of everybody else. Gabrovo was an oasis of high-spirited freedom.

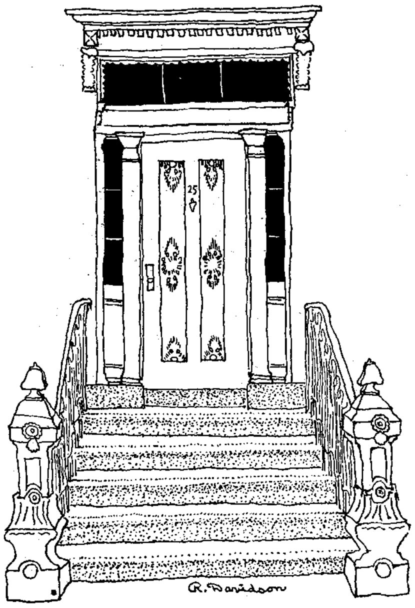
Gabrovo's Hotel Balkan, where we and most other visitors were booked, was no Sheraton Sofia, however. Workmen were still laying carpets in seedy corridors for the heavy international foot traffic, the front desk was harried, the room décor was a symphony of purples, and there was no hot water. But I assumed that there were no electronic bugs in the rooms, either; it would have taken a regiment of Bulgarian eavesdroppers to keep tabs on all the foreigners present.

The festival didn't officially begin until the next day, so Iliana and I had time to look around and have a leisurely dinner. Gabrovo marches up both steep slopes of the Yantra River Valley. Several ornate bridges cross the Yantra, testifying to an artisan tradition. The main bridge passes near a mammoth mid-river rock that serves as the pedestal for a bronze statue of Racho the Blacksmith, another physical and spiritual symbol of Gabrovo. The local lore has it, Iliana told me, that the Gabrovonians wanted to erect a statue of the consummate craftsman, the mythical founder of Gabrovo, but no citizen in this town with its singular reputation for closeness was willing to contribute land for the monument. The natural Gabrovonian solution was to place the statue in no man's land—on a rock in the middle of the Yantra. The humor of Gabrovo is relentless.

We strolled through a crowded clock-tower square and watched a group of teen-agers tune up their amplifiers for a rock concert. With other teen-agers pressing close to the bandstand, it looked like a scene in any American square—except, of course, for a sign on top of a nearby building reading "Слава на КРСС," or "Glory to the Soviet Communist Party." I asked Iliana "Why the Soviet Communist Party, and not the Bulgarian Communist Party?" and she answered "Because it is bigger and we owe it so much." Then, swiftly changing the subject, she recommended that we eat at the best restaurant in town—Strannopriemnitsa, whose name means "inn."

Strannopriemnitsa was indeed an inn—a venerable one, which over centuries had provided shelter for travellers and their horses. A waiter stood at the doorway with a tray holding a round loaf of bread and a dish of seasoned salt—a rite of welcome, to which the newcomer responded by dipping a small piece of bread in the salt and eating it on the spot. An open-air two-tiered courtyard was jammed with trees, tables, and more diners than seemed possible. The best restaurant in town was obviously no secret. A combo in folk garb played folk music on an accordion, a guitar, a bass, an amplified keyboard, and a drum while a plain woman sang plaintively. We wandered through the entire restaurant searching for room to sit down, and just when we were ready to give up, three Bulgarian workingmen at a corner table offered to let us crowd in with them. Two more chairs were brought by a harassed waiter, and we settled into the clamorous scene.

The three workingmen were drunk as goats. They were drinking cupfuls of slivovitz, the way Russians drink vodka, chain-smoking native Phoenix cigarettes all the while. Food was not on their mind, but it was on ours. They insisted on ordering for us, and before we knew it bowls of karator—sour Bulgarian yogurt mixed with cucumbers and walnuts—magically appeared before Iliana and me, along with cups of slivovitz. The karator tasted delicious and healthy, just the thing for a warm night after a long day's journey. I recalled that my old college friend had once told me that his Bulgarian grandfather lunched every day of his adult life on a bowl of yogurt with cucumbers and garlic cloves, and lived to be eighty-eight. Plates of lukanka, a spicy sausage not unlike pepperoni, were brought, and we gobbled and drank.



The combo struck up a tune in the Turkish-Arabic style, and two men began to dance, holding a handkerchief between them. When I asked Iliana if that kind of music was typical of Bulgaria, she said that her countrymen were insulted by such comparisons with the Middle East—that Bulgarians thought of themselves as Slavic Europeans. Then the band broke into a *choro*, an athletic round dance identical to the Rumanian-Israeli hora. The center of the courtyard, suddenly aswirl with stomping dancers, could have been the meeting hall of a Galilean kibbutz. "Now, *that's* Bulgarian," Iliana said.

Taking a break from the feast, I lighted my pipe, and we introduced ourselves formally to our three benefactors. Through Iliana, they learned my name, nationality, and occupation, and I learned that two of them were called Georgi and the third was Dinko. Georgi I, squat, amiable, with wavy gray hair combed straight back from a high forehead, said that he was a truck driver from a village in the Gabrovo district and had hauled freight internationally for thirty years, as his father had before him. It was hard work, he said thickly, but he loved it—especially when he came home and got a big welcome from his daughter, who was his great joy in life. His wife, though, was another matter. She was a shrew and complained about his dirty shirts; Georgi told her that she shouldn't complain about anything as long as he didn't come home with another wife. He liked all people except the Turks, and he liked Gabrovo more than any other place on earth, particularly for the Gabrovonian sense of humor.

Georgi II was much less communicative, because he was much drunker. He had the face and punchy manner of a losing boxer. A freight handler by trade, he said that although he smoked many cigarettes he had never smoked a pipe. Would I let him smoke mine? I responded that that was like asking to borrow somebody's toothbrush. He understood, but continued to stare covetously at my pipe. Iliana was embarrassed by Georgi II.

Dinko, a darkly handsome welder, was caught up in the music and not much given to conversation. He insisted that we all be quiet and listen while he conducted and sang along. He, too, was interested in my pipe, because he carved walnut pipes as a hobby. I let him examine the pipe, and he said that he could never make one as good.

Then Georgi II, who had lost his rudder, rose from the table and stumbled off somewhere, never to return. As soon as all the food was finished—"It is a sin to leave food on the table," the remaining Georgi declared—it was time for us to leave, too.

When the check arrived, Georgi proclaimed that we were his and Dinko's guests. I instructed Iliana to tell them that, on the contrary, I was in their debt and I insisted on paying. No. Georgi was adamant. "If you hate us, you will pay the bill," he said. "You are the first American I have ever met, and I will not give hospitality on loan." I looked to Iliana for a way out of what was becoming an international incident. She simply shrugged her shoulders: it had been a long, tiring, and now embarrassing day for her. The tab was rather sizable—about half of what an average Bulgarian makes for a week of labor. What to do? Finally, I said that I would accept their hospitality if they would let me buy them two bottles of slivovitz. Good idea, they said. We would go to the Hotel Balkan night club and get the bottles of slivovitz, but they would pay for the bottles, not I. Things were getting worse and worse. Balkan wars have begun over less. What I really wanted was to go to sleep.

At the Hotel Balkan night club, which featured video shows on a large screen alternating with live strippers and conjurers, there was a hassle with the headwaiter over a suitable table. A great deal of indignant quarrelling led to no violence, however, and before long bleary Georgi stalked out. "I am going home now and nap," he announced. We shook hands and pledged that we would meet again, and that he would be my guest. Dinko stayed on to continue his pointless dispute with the headwaiter while Iliana and I slipped off to the hotel lobby, where a boisterous Finnish delegation to the festival was checking in. It is quite a place, this Gabrovo.

THE creator and driving force behind the House of Humor and Satire and its biennial festivals was one man—Stefan Furtounov, the organi-

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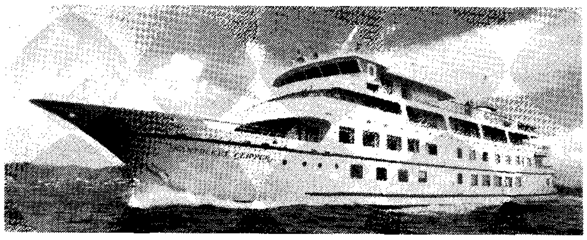

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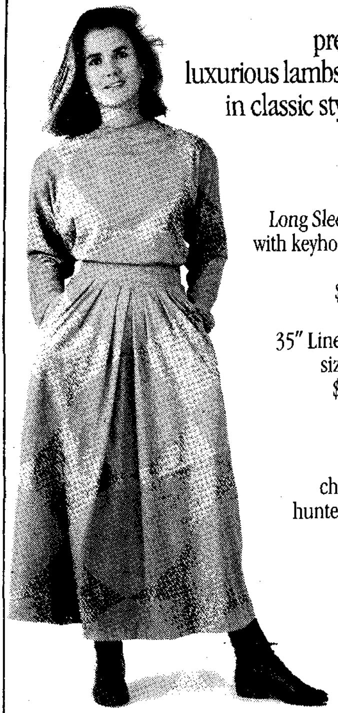
zation's director. Because such individual enterprise is unusual in a socialist nation, Furtounov was something of a legend in Bulgarian artistic and literary circles. I wanted to meet him, and Iliana arranged an interview at his office just before the festival officially opened, on the morning of Saturday, May 16th.

Furtounov, a middle-aged man with professorial brown eyes that twinkled mischievously, ushered us through last-minute bedlam and into a panelled office next to a House art gallery devoted to a festival exhibition. He spoke no English, and so Iliana demonstrated her formidable talent as a simultaneous translator. When I complimented the director on the impressiveness of the House itself and what I had glimpsed so far of its contents, he affected humility and said that the whole setup was a Gabrovonian joke of sorts, in that the building was once a leather factory, so all they had had to do was convert it into a museum, theatre, and café, without paying for new walls and a roof. He went on to say that the real purpose of the festival was for people from around the world who dealt in all forms of humor to meet and exchange ideas and become friends. "Neither today's nor tomorrow's man is a devil or an angel," he said. "We must live with and laugh together about that dilemma if we are going to survive. Great humor is deeply human and has no boundaries. Mark Twain, for instance, belongs to the world."

I asked the director why this unique international event happened in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, and sensed from his slightly miffed reaction that he had been asked the question too often.

"I can say that Bulgarians have a highly developed sense of humor, even from ancient times," he replied. "We have outstanding artists and authors, some known internationally. Gabrovo is a natural setting for our purpose, because it is connected with so many jokes and anecdotes. I wrote the book called 'Gabrovo Anecdotes,' so I know the local humor well. It is the self-mocking humor of the ingenious and the thrifty—but certainly not the stingy—who know how to make big things out of small things, or out of practically nothing at all. They are very complex people who can find a way out of any difficulty. They follow a practical religion. That is why others make jokes—often envious jokes—about them."

Furtounov said that he was born in



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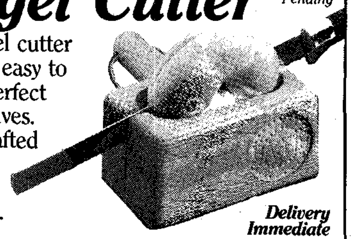

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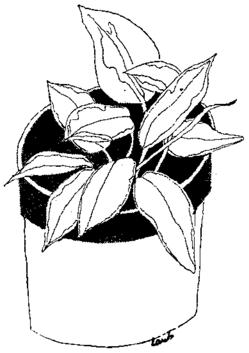
a nearby town, studied law, and served Gabrovo as its legal counsel for nineteen years. His hobby was literature, and he studied the folktales of the region. "I realized there were high values in Gabrovonian humor, and that's when the idea came to me to show those values in a local museum. Soon it grew into a museum of humor art of all nations and the biennial festivals. We enjoyed the support of the authorities in this venture. Now I am no longer a lawyer. This receives my full devotion. It is more fun than being a lawyer—well, maybe not the organizing work—and it is more satisfying, trying to do something where you have no enemies."

How about the authors and artists whose work isn't exhibited or who don't win prizes in the competition? Aren't they potential enemies?

"Ah, enemies there always are, I suppose, as well as problems," he said. "But I can assure you that what we do here is pure, and we do not fault people for their political convictions or the color of their skin. I attended a humor conference at Arizona State University this year—invited by Professor Don Nilsen, who is here in Gabrovo now, representing the U.S.A. —and I liked it, liked all things American. I met Kurt Vonnegut, who won our festival's Hitar Petar Grand Prix for literature in 1983 but didn't come here to accept, because he doesn't like to travel, he told me. But I hope the American people and all others see that what we are doing here is important. If we have to shoot something at each other, we'd better shoot smiles."



With that, he shot me a big smile and handed me a Gabrovo coffee mug ("divided into equal halves, so you can treat two people with one cup of coffee") and a special Gabrovo coin, cut into four pieces ("so you can have the smallest denomination that ever existed and use it for tips").

I told him that such Gabrovo humor had its counterpart in America with the late comedian Jack Benny.

"You see, it is universal, like music," he said.

ILIANA and I took advantage of our privileged entry to the House, before the official public opening, to have a quiet look around. We started in the art gallery, where the paintings varied in size, style, and what one might broadly consider humorous content. Unsurprisingly, they were mostly by Bulgarian artists, and tended to satirize the everyday aspects of Bulgarian life rather than the political—because, I assumed, they could go that far and no further. For instance, Nikolay Karamfilov's painting called "Cleaning" poked fun at the lax Bulgarian work ethic, which, in a severely regulated economy, doesn't make for extra initiative or effort; he portrayed doltish employees watching television in a store whose window bore a sign reading "CLOSED FOR CLEANING." Other art works dealt with dissolute teen-agers; Black Sea fishermen trying to ply their trade through a sea of topless female bathers; and a morose, overfed, drunken family. The Grand Prix winner was Georgi Bozhilov's "Idol"—a Cubistic skeleton and bull that paid homage to Picasso.

Among the works of other nations represented were the American Warrington Colescott's "Photo Opportunity," an assemblage of ugly tourists snapping pictures; the Nicaraguan Italo Medrano's depressing "Clowns;" and the Russian Mark Abramov's anti-American caricatures—the most blatantly propagandistic pictures in the exhibition. The remaining works were mainly from Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and the Third World.

The photographs, sculpture, drawings, and cartoons displayed were similar in style and subject to the paintings. The humor ranged from the heavy-handed to the light. On the upper floors were exhibitions of humor in stamps, masks, fresco reproductions, children's art, and books—the last including books by this year's Hitar Petar Grand Prix winner for literature, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, who, like Kurt Vonnegut before him, had sent his regrets. It struck me that the wonder of the House of Humor and Satire wasn't so much the art it contained as the fact of its existence.

We spent the rest of the day taking in the carnival-like atmosphere of the festival: the opening ceremonies, complete with big-shot government functionaries; a parade; a band concert, which featured the *gaida*, a bagpipe made from a sheep's stomach; an old man with a performing bear; a so-called humorous fashion show; and, best of all, a folk-dance troupe of tireless, talented kids, who could give the

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Moiseyev Dance Company a run for its money. The weather was nice, and good humor was in the air.

Instead of dinner at Strannopriemnitsa again, we accepted an invitation to a buffet for dignitaries and the press at the Hotel Balkan. The town's mayor made a short speech, welcoming us all in the name of "the workers of Gabrovo" (the only workers of Gabrovo present were servers and busboys), and an exhausted but game Stefan Furtounov said a few words, and then all the distinguished freeloaders attacked tables loaded with wine, beer, white-caviar pâté, cold cuts, fish, cheeses, meatballs, and salad. Except that a piano-guitar duo was playing "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean" and "Amazing Grace," it reminded me of a dozen similar scenes I had been a part of in New York. Everyone stayed until the last morsel of food was gone and the dishes had been removed by the workers of Gabrovo.

While we ate, I asked Iliana if there were any irredentists around who still cherished the idea of a Greater Bulgaria, with ports on the Adriatic and the Aegean, as well as the Black Sea. She said that there were a few, mainly monarchists. The pretender to the Bulgarian throne—Simeon II, the fifty-year-old son of Boris III (who was said to have been executed by Nazi agents in 1943 for his refusal to enforce anti-Jewish laws)—lives in exile in Spain, where he receives occasional subjects who kneel before him. He attended the Prince Charles–Lady Diana wedding as the King of Bulgaria. "But no one except the British really takes him seriously," she added.

We looked over the schedule of events for the next day. It included three conferences on humor, which the festival's organizers had specifically asked us to attend, so we decided that duty called—the side trip to Varna was out. Perhaps we could take a shorter jaunt later on, if the festival schedule allowed.

THE first conference, arranged by the Organizing Committee, began at 9 A.M. in the House's combination theatre and night club. The star attraction was to be an appearance by Georgi Yordanov, whose titles were Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, President of the Council for Cultural Development at the Council of Ministers, and President of the Committee for Culture (which, Iliana informed me, had just changed its name to the Committee for Spiritual Development), but he didn't show up, to the disappointment of the TV cameramen and other members of the Bulgarian press covering the event. Proyno Proynov, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the District People's Council of Gabrovo and President of the District Council for Cultural Development, did, however, and he presided over what seemed to me like a session of the U.N. General Assembly held in a cabaret. Stefan Furtounov was there, handing out simultaneous-translation transistor sets and pressing the flesh like a Chicago alderman. Watching him in action, I understood the success of his institution.

As members of the Organizing Committee and the delegates droned on (the Russians were by far the most long-winded), I sipped my third cup of coffee and dreamed of Varna by the sea. How lovely it would have been on this warm, cloudless day! Every speaker had something to say about the role of humor in a not very funny world and what could be done to enhance it. When it was the turn of the American delegate, Professor Don Nilsen, of Arizona State University, I perked up; it was good to hear an American voice. Nilsen proposed closer coöperation between East and West and between the humanities and the arts. "We know everything about humor except how to use it," he said.

There was one humorous moment at that first humor conference, however. We were joined at our table by two delegates from China and their Bulgarian translator, who, it turned out, could not speak Chinese. While the speakers went on, she smiled at the Chinese gentlemen and they smiled back at her. The Chinese experimented with the simultaneous-translation sets but could pick up no familiar language. "They are the lucky ones," I told Iliana.

There was a touchy moment, too. Ulrich Weber, a Swiss representative, spoke on behalf of Friedrich Dürrenmatt. He quoted Dürrenmatt as saying, rather ungraciously, that while he thanked them for the prize he had no use for it or the money (two thousand leva) or the honor, since he had enough of all those already. A collective gasp sounded once the translation had taken effect. A sharp-featured Bulgarian writer took the floor to restore calm. "Every prize is like a new lover," he said. "Even if one has had many lovers, each new one brings joy." He hoped that someday Dürrenmatt would come to Gabrovo and see for himself what was offered there. Despite the Gabrovo festival's success, hints of disdain from the West hurt the Bulgarians' feelings. Only the East seemed to take the humor festival seriously.

Two hours was not enough, Proyno Proynov announced, but the conference must end, so that the participants could travel by shuttle vans to nearby Etur for the next conference, for editors of humor publications. On the way out, I introduced myself to Don Nilsen and his wife, Alleen, both tall, hearty Southwesterners. They were as happy to hear another American as I was. Their luggage had been lost on the way to Bulgaria, but they were nevertheless planning to attend all the events. "We are gamy but game," Nilsen said.

In the van to Etur, I tried to strike up a conversation with Edward Kuczyński, the editor of the Polish satirical magazine *Szpilki*. I asked him if he published much about Solidarity these days. "Let's not talk about ancient history," he answered, and so we didn't.

Etur was a combination of Bear Mountain State Park and Colonial Williamsburg, with hundreds of Bulgarian families picnicking on the grounds of a reconstructed nineteenth-century village—an open-air museum, it is called. The active water mill, blacksmith and cutler's shops, looms, and marketplace all appeared painstakingly authentic, and the costumed artisans knew what they were about, and the barbecue-stand lines were long and happy, and comics on a stage were telling funny Bulgarian folk stories, and handicrafts were for sale. The purlenki—round loaves of fresh bread—smelled particularly appetizing. Iliana said that only special places baked such bread; most bread in Bulgaria comes from centralized government bakeries, so really fresh purlenki are a rare treat for a people who have a Slavic reverence for bread. Everybody was having a relaxed Sunday-afternoon outing except the conferees, who had to crowd into an airless, hot room for more speeches on humor.

"Comrades, welcome to this meeting," said the moderator, Hristo Palitev, the editor of the Bulgarian newspaper *Sturshel*. Lukewarm Coca-Colas were served, and another U.N. Gen-

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eral Assembly session occurred in an unlikely place. The problems facing humorists and satirists were once again explored. To paraphrase E. B. White, the heavy editors had got humor down and were breaking its arm. Humor cried out in pain. Alexei Pyanov, the editor of the Russian magazine *Krokodil*, put in a temperate plug for *glasnost*, and the uncommunicative editor of *Szpilki* said, "In Poland, humorists have been in abundance recently." That woke up the audience a little, but a Mongolian editor, speaking crude Russian, put them right back to sleep. Even Stefan Furtounov had his head in his hands. Somebody complained about the plumbing in the Hotel Balkan and received an appreciative laugh. Blessedly, the meeting ended before anybody fainted.

Iliana and I barely had time for lunch in the Etur beer garden before the third conference—a seminar of humorists at the Gabrovo Writers' Club. We needed all the sustenance we could get. We wolfed down purlenki, cucumbers, sheep's-milk cheese, pork shashlik, and beer, then rushed to catch a van back to town. Perhaps because there was only one more conference to go, the passengers in that van were in a good mood. The Nilsens, their translator, two Swedes, a Bulgarian editor, Iliana, and I all chattered away, making jokes about ourselves and one another. There, quite spontaneously, was the Gabrovo spirit that Furtounov so desired—different people coming together and laughing, without any propagandistic axes to grind.

NOTHING that had occurred so far prepared me for what was to come. The fact that the third conference was to be at the Gabrovo Writers' Club—that there indeed *was* a writers' club in a town that size—should have given me a clue. The club was a comfortable hall in a small timber-and-masonry building on a back street. It was standing room only when we arrived, with dozens of smoking, drinking writers (no editors, no officials, but certainly a fink lurking somewhere) listening intently to an emotional Russian. The atmosphere was unwholesome and electric, like that of certain Greenwich Village bars and coffeehouses in the nineteen-fifties.

The Russian writer, a brooding intellectual, set the tone for the seminar. He spoke passionately of *glasnost* and what it meant to him and his col-

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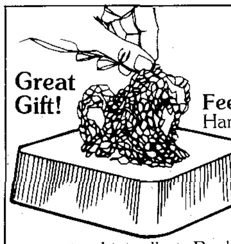

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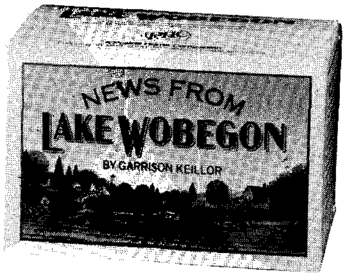

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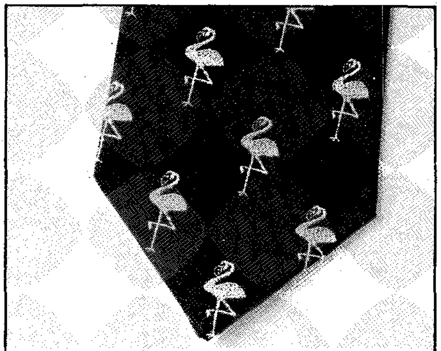

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leagues at the Union of Writers. "In the chorus of silence, satire was received as a revelation and the truth," he concluded. "Now we are learning to speak the truth in our own words, and this is very difficult." The applause was a cannonade.

One after another, Bulgarian writers were moved to speak, suddenly inspired and apparently unafraid. A woman complained that good writing in Bulgaria either was not published or sold out quickly, while junk lasted forever. As for satire, she said, it must be ever more self-critical, and "we must have more freedom about when our satire appears—before, not after, a government decree." Another Bulgarian said that he was permitted to criticize the foibles of the common people but now he would like to be able to criticize the Party Secretary. He called for more action and less talk about *glasnost*. Another echoed that call by quoting, of all things, the Bible. "In the beginning was the Word," he said, adding, "Now it is time for the deeds." Another expressed his worries in a parable: A writer kept a wooden shoe in a vase full of water, and when he was asked why he did such a thing he replied that literary freedom would flower when the shoe flowered; finally, the shoe rotted and had to be thrown away.

Even Georgi Yordanov, the President of the Committee for Culture (or, of late, Spiritual Development), was assailed. A journalist told the assembly about the election of a director of a drama school in Sofia: the man elected fell ill and couldn't accept the post, yet the next day he received a telegram from Yordanov congratulating him on his election. Nobody really knows or cares about what is going on, the speaker said. Someone else praised the distinguished Bulgarian writer Radoy Ralin, who had won the Georgi Dimitrov Prize, the nation's highest literary award, in 1982. Thirteen of his works had since been rejected by the government, the speaker said. "Obviously, the Minister of Culture is a very divided man," he went on, adding, "Maybe we should go to the U.S.S.R. and criticize just a little bit, the way we Bulgarian writers know how to do." Knowing laughter.

A man with a tape recorder asked the participants to speak louder.

"What do you care?" someone shouted. "Everything we say here is being recorded anyway." More knowing laughter.

Then a Polish writer stood and

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asked to speak, through a Bulgarian translator. He had a sensitive, almost tragic face, and his voice often broke. "The world is complicated," he said. "In Poland, we have terrible troubles, but the nation as a whole does not really know about them or understand them. It took the Polish Pope to defend the nation and bring wisdom to the people, which is a paradox. The freedom to know is our great task."

Breaking the thoughtful silence that followed, a Russian took the floor and said that until recently the Russians had been led by a strong hand, but now there was *glasnost*, and his people had to learn how to use it. "I hope for a day when I can stand up in a sports stadium and say what I want," he continued. "But in order for this new freedom to be preserved we must not take it for granted. We Russians did not fight for this new freedom. It was given to us, and what is easily given can just as easily be taken away."

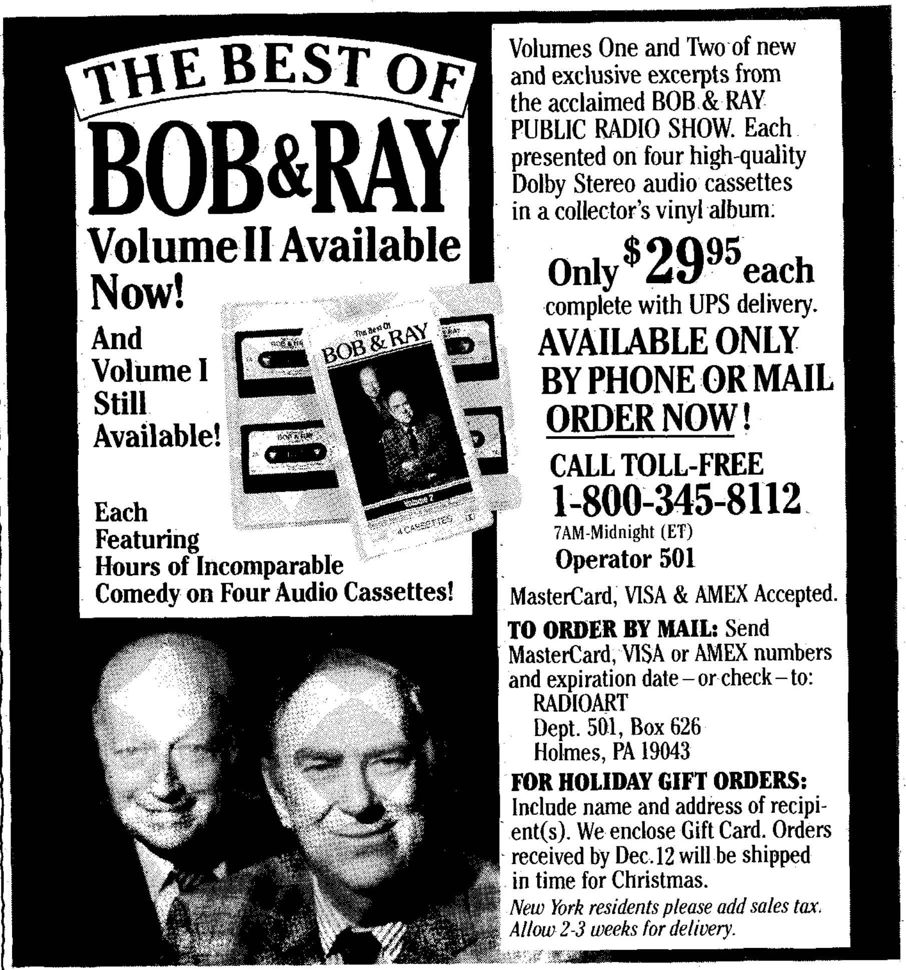
At last, everyone present was drained, physically and spiritually. There was nothing more to be said. The front door of the Writers' Club opened in an explosion of smoke and body heat, and the conferees dispersed. But something important had happened. They had tasted clear water at the oasis of Gabrovo, and maybe they would never be quite the same again.

The following morning, Iliana and I breakfasted at the Retired Officers Club, which had been transformed into a bar and restaurant for the press and delegates. We socialized amiably and internationally. The one difficult moment I had there was a conversation with Bozhidar Stoykov, the head of the House of Humor and Satire's literature department. He wanted to know why American writers did not participate in the festival. "We invite them to at least send their short stories for the collections we publish," he complained. "Some of them answer, but they do not participate. Why is this?"

Trying to avoid the real reason—that most American writers had probably snickered and tossed the letters into wastebaskets—I blamed literary agents. Perhaps agents don't think that Bulgaria will pay for reprint rights, I suggested.

"Not so Bulgaria," Stoykov said. "We have copyright agency in Sofia, and it pays for reprints of many things—John Cheever, James Thurber, for instance." He was plainly hurt by this situation, and I felt sorry for him.

That incident notwithstanding, I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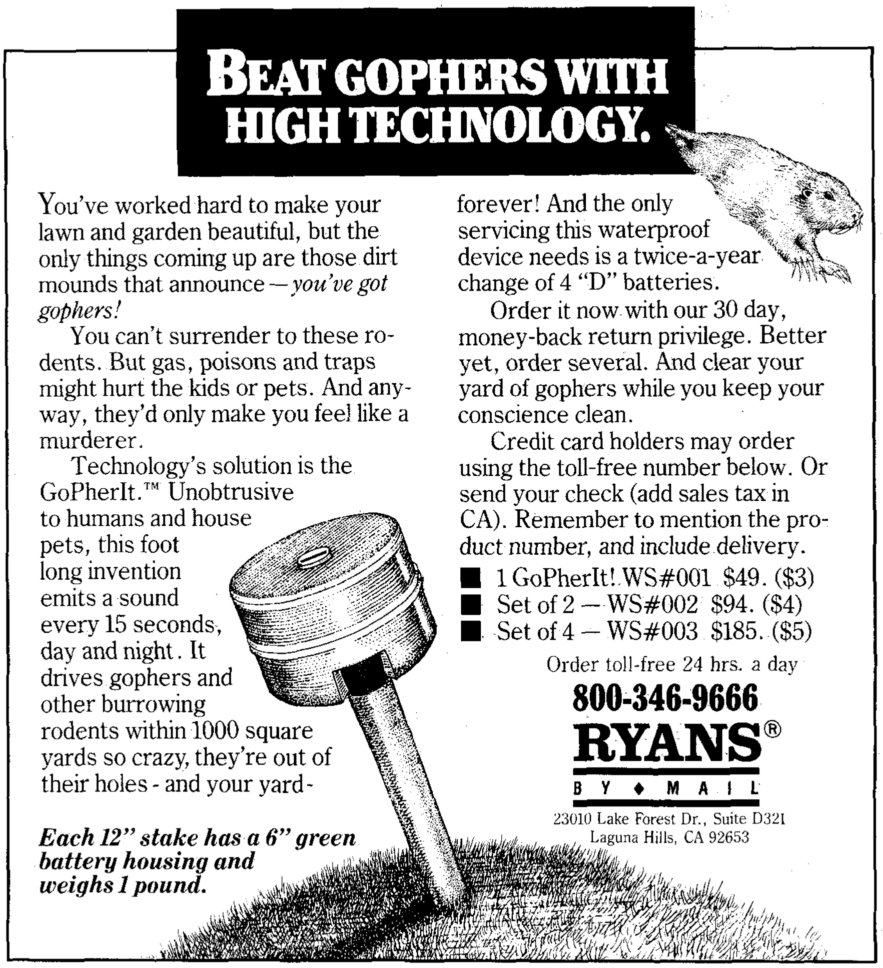
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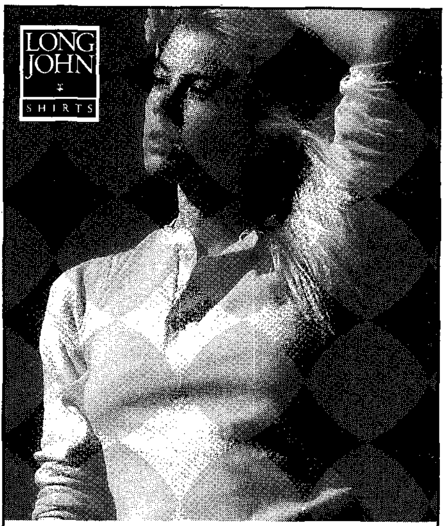
was feeling rather relaxed—at home, even. I had totally put aside my concerns about bugs and taps and tails and theft. Then, on our last afternoon in Gabrovo, Iliana and I had time for a sightseeing trip to the twelfth-century Dryanovo Monastery and the ancient czarist capital of Veliko Tŭrnovo. Driving north through green hills, I spotted in the rearview mirror a familiar black Moskvich, with a familiar driver, following our car. Could he be the gray-suited, stocky man from the Sheraton lobby and the roadside restaurant, or was I being paranoid? When I observed him again, strolling behind us on the main street of Veliko Tŭrnovo, I believed both possibilities.

That night, as I packed my suitcase, I sorted out my thoughts on the past six days. Bulgaria, for all its beauty, intelligence, and charm, was still Bulgaria—a police state trying to cope with itself and the twentieth century. Its national pride shrank in the face of its national inferiority complex. Its citizens' equanimity barely masked their frustration. For all its Gabrovonian humor, it was no comical Graustark. It was a touching nation in desperate need of fresh air and good luck. Poor afflicted, vulnerable, relentless Bulgaria.

EARLY the next morning, on the road to Sofia, we drove through the Valley of Roses and were met by a sudden intoxicating, overpowering scent that clung to the memory. For a few moments, I felt like Dorothy in the poppy field before the Emerald City. I'm sure that my parting in Sofia with Iliana, stalwart friend and translator, was extra sentimental because of that memory. The tenacious aroma of a million roses even narcotized my anxiety about leaving the country with my notes and person intact.

At the airport, I went through passport control and the final security check without a hitch. "No problem," the last functionary said. On board the Lufthansa flight to Munich, I was still rose-mellow as I devoured the *Financial Times* for the news of the world I had so sorely missed, and a MIG fighter buzzing our plane near the Yugoslav border hardly bothered me. ("They do it all the time," the stewardess said.) It was wonderful to feel unfettered and to be going home, but somehow I found myself already missing the strange land. Whenever I think about Bulgaria now, I smell the roses first. —BURTON BERNSTEIN



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AROUND CITY HALL

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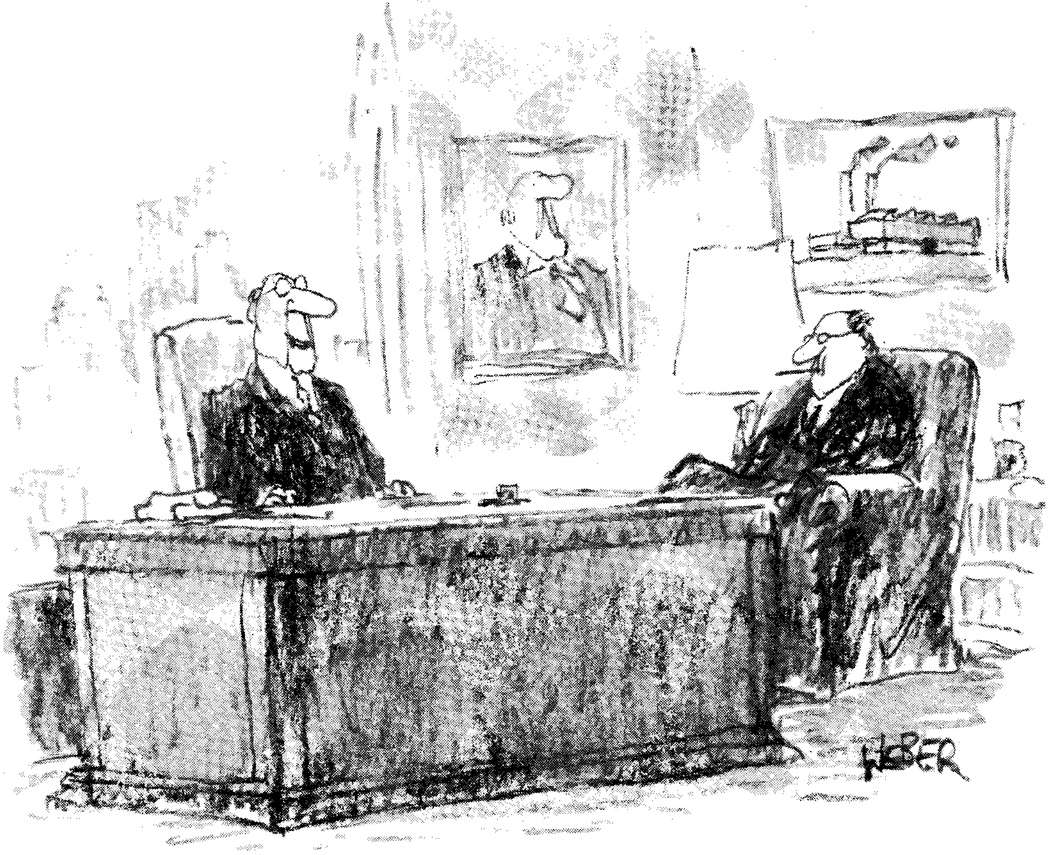
THE courtroom scene was nothing like those in other recent city-corruption cases. The famous defendant, wearing a black Chanel suit and a crimson silk blouse and looking truly smashing, was arraigned on October 15th at the federal courthouse in Manhattan's Foley Square. She stood beside her much younger lover, with whom, according to the indictment announced eight days earlier by United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, she had unlawfully conspired with a State Supreme Court justice, also arraigned on October 15th, to bring about a reduction in the alimony payments to the lover's estranged wife. The lover had been brought to the courthouse from the federal penitentiary in Allenwood, Pennsylvania, where he is already serving a four-year sentence for tax fraud. The pair kissed and briefly held hands when they met before the bench. As Bess Myerson left the courtroom, her bail having been set at a quarter of a million dollars, a spectator stopped her to say, "I loved you in 'The Big Payoff' "—one of two television programs (the other was "I've Got a Secret") on which her regular appearances made her a national celebrity. She had been ordered to surrender her passport but had permission to travel to other parts of the country, which would allow her to make a scheduled promotion tour for a new book, entitled "Miss America, 1945: Bess Myerson's Own Story." After the arraignment, she was led upstairs for fingerprinting and the taking of mug shots. As a huge crowd of reporters and photographers waited for her to come out of the courthouse, they broke, inevitably, into a chorus of "There she goes . . ."

The study of municipal corruption is often a methodical endeavor requiring consideration of balance sheets, disclosure statements, records of interlocking directorates, and, for an occasional dash of color, testimony about cash payoffs in the men's rooms of unfashionable restaurants. A different kind of evidence was reflected in the indictment against the sixty-three-year-old Miss Myerson, Carl (Andy) Capasso, a city construction contractor, who was born in 1945, the year that she became Miss America (the first from New York), and Hortense Gabel, previously a highly respected member of the judiciary. According to the indictment, in the summer of 1983 Judge Gabel had corrupted her office in return for Miss Myerson's willingness to provide a job for the Judge's doted-upon only child, an emotionally fragile daughter named Sukhreet, who hadn't held a full-time position in ten years. Although money was surely involved, it did seem that, in several aspects, the case gave the lie to Rosalind's pronouncement, in "As You Like It," that "men have died . . . and worms have eaten them, but not for love." The job given to Sukhreet Gabel was with the city. Mayor Edward Koch had named his old friend Miss Myerson head of the Cultural Affairs Commission earlier that year. Although Giuliani assured reporters this month that "no one was indicted for riding around in limousines," the indictment did describe how the principals in the case had ridden around in limousines and frolicked at Capasso's Westhampton Beach estate, where Koch had also been a guest in 1983 and 1984, and how Capasso had showered Miss Myerson with furs and jewels. "It was just like something out of 'Dallas,' " commented Sukhreet Gabel, who is now thirty-eight, and who has explained that she changed her name from Julie Bess some years back, because Sukhreet means "someone with the tradition of happiness."

The October 7th indictment charged the principals with six counts of conspiracy, mail fraud, using interstate facilities to violate bribery laws, and, in the case of Miss Myerson, obstruction of justice: at one point, it was alleged, she had gone to Sukhreet Gabel and told her, "Keep your big mouth shut"—a line that would not sound out of place in a prime-time soap opera. At the time Sukhreet was hired, the financial arrangements in the divorce suit brought by Capasso's



"You won't believe this, Bert. I think I've got a children's book in me."

estranged wife were before Judge Gabel. As a quid pro quo, according to the indictment, the Judge reduced his payments by almost two-thirds, or sixty thousand dollars a year. The night after Sukhreet went on the city payroll, Miss Myerson took her and her parents to dinner, and paid for the celebration with Capasso's credit card. Within three months after the ruling had come down, Sukhreet was fired by Miss Myerson. "BESS PAYS THE PRICE OF LOVE" was the headline in the *Post* on the day after the indictment. In the Mayor's office lately, there has been some nervousness about who, in the end, will pay the price. "I'm the key to the downfall of this administration," the former Miss America told a reporter last spring. In April, after the Mayor learned that his longtime friend had taken the Fifth Amendment before a Giuliani grand jury looking into Capasso's financial affairs, and had investigated the matter further, he forced her to resign her Cultural Affairs post. Even before the October 7th indictment, he had said that he no longer considered her a friend. Last June, Joyce Purnick reported in the *Times* that in 1980 a Police Department investigation had shown that after Miss Myerson was jilted by an earlier lover she had written scores of letters, some of them obscene, to the man in question and had made hundreds of often obscene calls to him and her successor in his affections. The Mayor knew of this demonstration of her emotional imbalance before he appointed her his cultural-affairs commissioner, but apparently the risk had seemed worth it. The day before her sudden appointment, at a public City Council hearing on a proposed gay-rights bill, a local rabbi had accused Koch—irresponsibly, and without offering a shred of evidence—of having a homosexual relationship with a mayoral assistant (who, by coincidence, was also a good friend of Miss Myerson's, and who has testified before the grand jury in the current case). There was a suspicion that a chance to remind New Yorkers of his presumed onetime closeness to Miss Myerson, harking back to his 1977 mayoral campaign, had proved irresistible to Koch. Some of his advisers are now said to be trying to put out of their minds the heroine, played by Glenn Close, of what is currently the nation's most popular movie, who sets out to destroy the man who has scorned her. Earlier this month, a *Post* cartoon showed a

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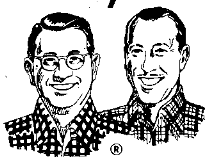

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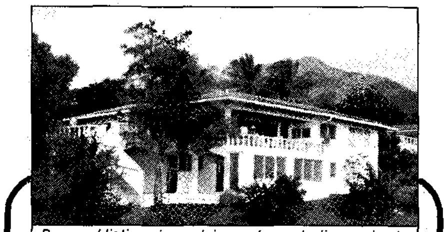

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sketch of the city's former cultural-affairs commissioner with, as its caption, the name of the movie and its subtitle: "Fatal Attraction—A Terrifying Love Story."

THE grand marshal of this year's Columbus Day parade, the annual celebration of local Italian-Americans, was Giuliani, surely Bess Myerson's least favorite prosecutor. According to Vincent Tese, the head of the foundation that stages the parade, the U.S. Attorney was the first grand marshal from the criminal-justice system, possibly because—although Tese didn't put it exactly this way—Italian-Americans have often been associated in the public mind with the other side of the law. Giuliani stepped along smartly, waving at the crowd, from which there were occasional, rather perfunctory cries of "Rudy! Rudy!"—his first taste of a political-rally atmosphere. In 1983, when he assumed his present post in New York, his native city, after two years as the No. 3 man in Ronald Reagan's Department of Justice, the regional assignment was seen as professionally a step down. It was widely believed that he had in mind a future in New York politics, and lately he has not discouraged speculation that he may resign sometime soon to run for United States senator, for governor, or for mayor. The reason the forty-three-year-old Giuliani is being treated by some members of both major parties here as a kind of folk hero is that much public attention—rival prosecutors inevitably call it credit-grabbing—has been focussed on a long string of indictments, followed with impressive frequency by convictions, that he has brought in the last couple of years against prominent figures in the worlds of organized crime, Wall Street, and municipal politics. In any event, Republican prosecutors who get credit for cleaning up corruption in this Democratic city have been known to go far in politics: if a reporter looking at the U.S. Attorney's future fails to mention the name of Tom Dewey, someone from Giuliani's office may work it into the conversation.

The choice of a prosecutor to lead this month's parade seemed appropriate, since much of the news that has reached the rest of the country under a New York dateline in recent weeks has had to do with criminal proceedings. Indeed, it was because some well-known marchers in past Columbus Day parades were featured in such

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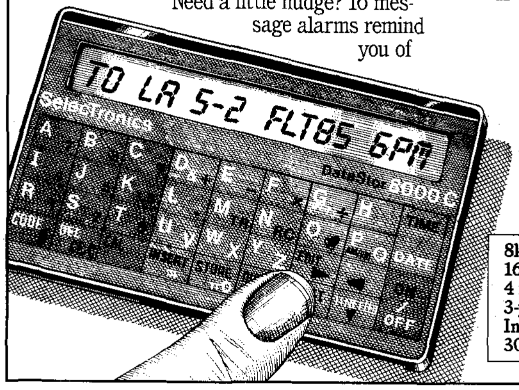

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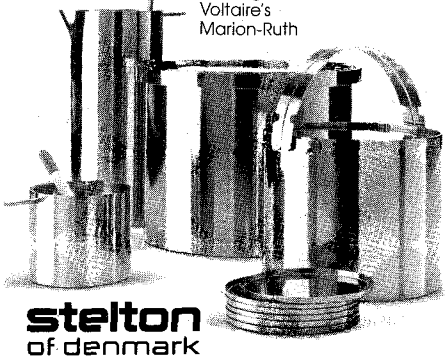

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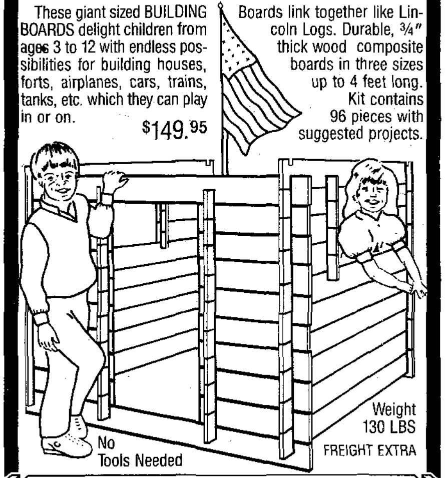

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news dispatches that they did not make this month's event. Former Queens Representative Geraldine Ferraro had been a parade regular; in 1984, when she was the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee, her progress up Fifth Avenue for the length of the march was accompanied by jubilant chants of "Gerr-*y!* Gerr-*y!* Gerr-*y!*" This month, she was busy elsewhere, preoccupied with the trial, in the Queens courthouse, of her husband, John Zaccaro, on the charge that he had attempted to extort a million dollars from would-be bidders for a Queens cable franchise. (On October 14th, he was acquitted on all counts.) Anthony Ameruso, the city's former transportation commissioner, was also absent on Columbus Day, having been convicted in July of perjury, committed in connection with a quarter of a million dollars he had invested in a company that, as a *Daily News* editorial pointed out this month, was "linked to a firm seeking a heavy contract with—guess who?—Ameruso's transportation department." The *News* added, "One of Ameruso's last acts in office was to okay the contract." To Koch's later regret, his pronouncement at Ameruso's farewell City Hall appearance was that the integrity of his transportation commissioner was "impeccable." Another no-show at the October 12th parade was former Brooklyn Democratic boss Meade Esposito. (His first name is short for Amadeo.) On September 22nd, Esposito was convicted of having given unlawful gratuities to a member of Congress in return for the congressman's assistance in securing a federal contract and leases of city property on beneficial terms for a company in whose prosperity Esposito had a substantial financial interest. The congressman was Bronx Representative Mario Biaggi, and at the same trial he was convicted of having received the gratuities (actually, paid vacations), of having travelled across state lines in the commission of a crime, and of obstruction of justice—all felonies. The headline in the *Post* was "THE FALL OF MEADE & MARIO." In the first year or so of the municipal scandals, and particularly after the conviction, last November, of Stanley Friedman and three other defendants on charges of having turned the city's Parking Violations Bureau into a racketeering enterprise—a case that Giuliani tried personally—local sociologists often noted that most of the figures in the local corruption story were Jewish, an observation that is now out of date.

Besides having been convicted on September 22nd, Biaggi is scheduled to go on trial next month, along with former Bronx Borough President Stanley Simon, on charges, brought by Giuliani, of having turned Wedtech, a South Bronx corporation, into a criminal enterprise that paid millions in bribes to win military contracts. Although Bronx politicians are already jostling each other for the privilege of succeeding Biaggi if the House Ethics Committee, now studying the matter, should require him to resign his office, Biaggi showed up for the October 12th parade, riding in an open convertible marked on the side in large letters "Congressman Mario Biaggi." When he got to the reviewing stand, he climbed the steps and shook hands with Grand Marshal Giuliani, showing no hard feelings, though Giuliani's office will be prosecuting him in the Wedtech case. Students of failed political fortunes—lately a popular local subject of research—were bound to recall a time when Biaggi's ambition was not to hold on to his congressional seat but to occupy higher office. In the nineteen-seventies, he often mentioned that the state had never had an Italian-American United States senator; he seemed to know of a worthy candidate to serve in that capacity. And for several months he was a serious contender in the 1973 mayoral race—a venture that foundered because of other legal problems. After he had loudly denied that in a 1971 appearance before a federal grand jury investigating political corruption here he had cited the Fifth Amendment, a court-ordered release of the grand-jury minutes proved that he had done so sixteen times. Another legal problem had also come up during the mayoral race: his treatment of an alleged criminal back in the nineteen-fifties, when he was a member of the city's police force. As a result, Biaggi is, as far as is known, the only candidate for mayor of New York to have gone on television to deny that he had ever bitten a man's ear off and explain that he could prove it by the autopsy report. Despite his legal troubles, as Biaggi, who first went to Congress in 1967, rode in the parade on October 12th there were friendly cries from some members of the crowd of "Mario!

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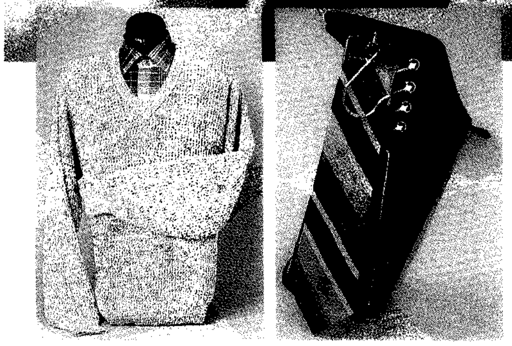

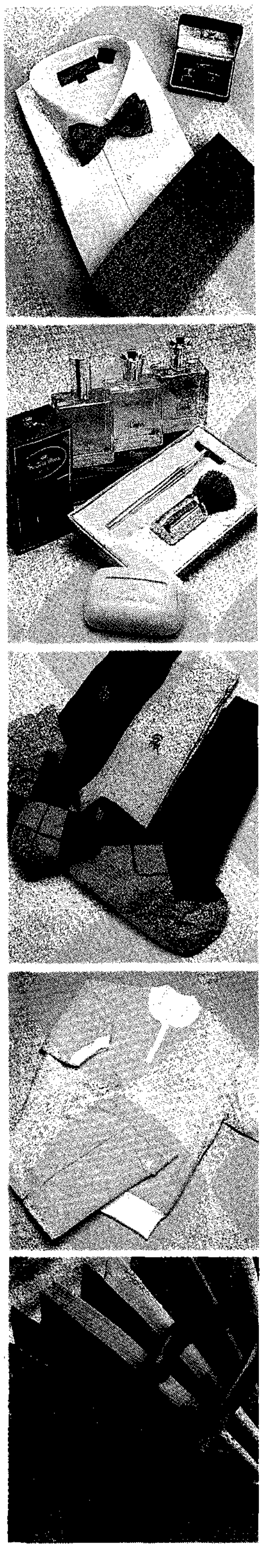

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Mario!"—none, of course, so loud and tumultuous as the "Mario! Mario!" that greeted a man near the front of the march, right behind Giuliani: Governor Cuomo, the first Italian-American to be elected governor of the state.

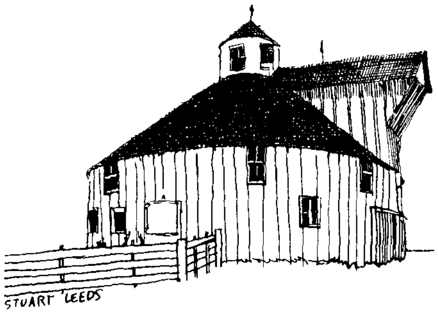
YOU didn't have to be of Italian heritage to be part of the show that day. On hand—though much farther back in the parade than the Governor—was Mayor Koch, who often remarks on how much he enjoys the events honoring his numerous ethnic constituents; the treat the previous weekend had been Pulaski Day, celebrating local Polish-Americans. While most of the other politicians marched on Columbus Day, the Mayor—possibly because of his August illness, which his doctors diagnosed as "a tiny, trivial stroke"—rode in a 1952 Chrysler Imperial limousine. From time to time, he raised his arms in the familiar body-language V sign, and he seemed to smile more than usual, possibly in an effort to discourage the notion that contemplation of what might come out at the Myerson trial had him badly worried.

Although the Mayor has tried to put all possible distance between himself and those charged to date with municipal corruption, most of them have been, politically, his people. Former Queens Democratic boss Donald Manes and others who have come to symbolize Queens corruption had backed him in his 1982 campaign against Cuomo for the governorship, even though Cuomo was from their home borough. Friedman and Simon, of the Bronx, were sure allies of the Mayor, and Biaggi his most reliable supporter among members of the city's delegation in the House of Representatives. In "Politics," Koch's political memoir, readers could learn that in 1977, when Koch, running for mayor for the first time, emerged from the Democratic primary only a single percentage point ahead of Cuomo and thus had to face a runoff election, he made a pilgrimage to Esposito's quarters in Brooklyn, the home of the city's largest bloc of Democrats. After some beseeching on Koch's part, the clubhouse boss promised to support him. It was specified that the agreement not be made public, because Koch was campaigning against the evils of the clubhouses. Cuomo, who had declined to make the trip, lost the runoff to Koch by ten points. Esposito has since explained that one reward he exacted from Koch was the appointment of Ameruso ("one of my guys") as transportation commissioner, although an advisory committee told Koch that Ameruso was unqualified. Despite this record of the Mayor's enduring political ties to those indicted so far, none have been perceived by the public as being as close to him as Bess Myerson—and little wonder, for that was the way, back in 1977, he and his advisers had arranged things.

No one would have expected Miss Myerson to march in this year's Columbus Day parade, even if she hadn't been indicted five days earlier, but some officials who are involved in the parade arrangements have not forgotten her appearance in 1977. In a local election year, it is customary for all candidates to march in the October event. During the campaign, Koch's media adviser, David Garth, had tried to make sure that his client hardly ever appeared in public without Miss Myerson at his side to lend excitement and glamour to a candidate who—it is now hard to recall—was regarded as an earnest but colorless sort. Also, as newspaper readers kept being reminded in the days after this month's indictment, her presence would tend to dispel rumors—troublesome in those days, too—that Koch, a lifelong bachelor, was homosexual. Sometimes, at rallies, the pair would go as far as to imply that marriage was imminent. Jimmy Breslin wrote later that the two of them had seemed to be "joined at the hip." When all the mayoral candidates marched together that Columbus Day, Miss Myerson walked hand in hand with Koch: she was the only non-candidate in the lineup. After Koch's victory, both he and Garth said that he would never have won without her. Since her indictment, however, the Mayor has declared that Bess—now his non-friend—was only one of a number of influential elements in his winning campaign.

AMONG those marching beside Cuomo this year on October 12th was Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who had ambled in a bit tardily from a side street. Irish-Americans can be said to have a particular claim on the annual event: it was Big Tim Sullivan, a lower-East Side Tammany leader and state assemblyman, who, in 1911, having noted that there were more and more voters of Italian descent in his district, sponsored the Albany bill establishing Columbus Day as a state holiday—the first such holiday in the nation. Clearly, attention to the political strength of Italian-Americans—who are now the largest ethnic voting bloc in this state—is not only a contemporary phenomenon. Moynihan, who is up for reëlection next year, was a sure bet not to miss the 1987 Italian-American parade: running against Moynihan is often cited as Giuliani's most likely political option. Mayor Koch clearly feels less rapport with New York's Democratic senator than with that senator's Republican counterpart, Alfonse D'Amato, who, in 1980, became the first Italian-American elected to the Senate from New York. (Last year, when D'Amato ran for reëlection, Koch endorsed him over a fellow-Democrat, Mark Green.) The Mayor has said that Giuliani would be "an awesome candidate" against Moynihan. Better awesome against a Democratic senator in 1988, he may be thinking, than against a Democratic mayor in 1989, when Koch comes up for reëlection. A gubernatorial race is not the political venture that is currently on Cuomo's mind. ("O Mario, Mario! Wherefore Art Thou, Mario?" was the caption on a recent S. Kelley cartoon, in the San Diego *Union*, dealing with the Democrats' 1988 Presidential predicament.) Nevertheless, the Governor did not leave the Columbus Day spotlight to the possibly awesome Giuliani (whose plausibility as a candidate for anything will not be established until he and his strategists are actually in the field, a truth that Koch and his handlers demonstrated in 1977). Cuomo, whose daughter Maria was married in the Executive Mansion on October 11th, skipped the first hours of a post-wedding reception the next day to fly down to the city and march in the big parade ("It's going to be a tough march today—I'm all worn out from dancing," he said), and then he flew back to Albany.

Reëlection problems were not on the mind of D'Amato, either—his present term lasts through 1992—as he marched beside Cuomo. What he kept



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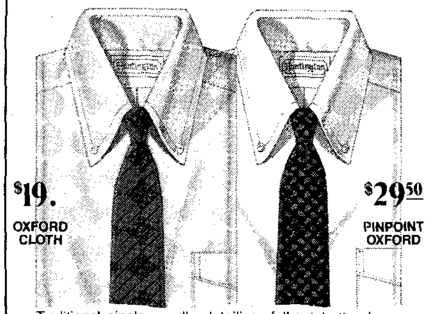

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having to answer questions about from reporters who importuned him along the line of march was Judge Robert Bork's decision to force the full Senate to vote on his Supreme Court nomination. This meant that D'Amato, so far uncommitted, would have to take a position and accept the political fallout from one direction or the other. (Eventually, he came out for Bork.) Although voting on nominations to the Supreme Court is not a responsibility of municipal officials, D'Amato's friend the Mayor—who, as his administration's problems with the law continue to pile up, has seemed more eager than ever to be heard on matters at a distance from local-government concerns—has already weighed in on the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings. Bork, he said, was "horribly mistreated," adding that "to have Joe Biden and Ted Kennedy lecture on morality is a sin."

THE week before Columbus Day had brought a few legal developments whose significance for some city residents was more immediate than that of Bork's nomination. On October 5th, the first day of its new session, the eight-member Supreme Court announced the cases that it would hear or would not hear in the coming year. The results were generally more welcome to the Koch administration than those it had received lately from lower levels of the judicial system. The Court declined to hear an appeal from a ruling, supported by the city, that left in place a Fire Department test measuring physical strength which would lead to the disqualifying of most women applicants. It agreed to hear a case testing the constitutionality of a New York City Council ordinance, favored by the Mayor, that, in effect, banned private clubs with four hundred or more members and certain other attributes from refusing membership to women or minorities. Most such clubs have a few minority members; the admission of women was the provision that had got their boards of directors fired up. The University Club, for one, had argued that it couldn't admit women because the present members like to swim naked in the club pool. A letter writer to the *Times* had proposed that in that case it call itself not the University Club but "the Naked Men's Swimming Club." Also on October 5th, the Supreme Court announced that it would not hear an appeal from a California decision that the Bohemian Club, to which the President and the Vice-President of the United States belong, must stop banning women even as employees. (The argument of the Bohemians had been that the presence of women at their rustic retreat would inconvenience men club members who like to relieve themselves against trees—thus establishing that club as another for which an alternative name recommended itself.) In a third ruling involving city government which was handed down on October 5th, the Supreme Court declined to hear a suit by some New Jersey officials who had sought to have Liberty Island, the home of the Statue of Liberty—which in fact is closer to New Jersey than to New York shores—declared New Jersey territory. Koch, sounding happier than he had in several months, immediately issued a formal mayoral statement: "The Statue of Liberty will continue to stand exactly where she has stood for a hundred years—on *an island belonging to the State of* New York, facing us and showing another side of her personality to New Jersey."

IT is the Mayor's good fortune that he has been offered an opportunity to get away for a few days and, at the same time, engage in international good works. The change, Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr., his former corporation counsel, mentioned in a letter to *Newsday* last month, will be especially therapeutic in view of the Mayor's August illness, which, in fact, is rarely mentioned around City Hall nowadays. For a time after Koch's return to work, his office issued regular reports on his progress in losing weight in accordance with his doctors' orders. After about a week, the Mayor, who is famous for his preoccupation with food, was caught chomping on a large sandwich at an ethnic festival, and he ended the weight-losing effort by saying, "The hell with the diet!" On September 8th, he revealed that he had had a call from Charles Robb, the former governor of Virginia, and a founder of a group that has encouraged unofficial, privately funded delegations from various parts of the country to go to Nicaragua and monitor the degree of compliance there with the Arias peace proposals. At Robb's suggestion, Koch announced, he had been asked to lead—and choose the members of—the delegation from this city. The travellers will include a number of members of his staff, a security detail, thirty or so representatives of the media, and his eight chosen fellow-delegates, several of them important contributors to past Koch mayoral campaigns, who have helped raise the money for his coming, nonpolitical trip. The group is scheduled to leave here early on the afternoon of November 1st and return on the morning of November 9th. Besides spending three days in Nicaragua, the group will stop in Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica, and make a final detour to Puerto Rico, which plays no special role in the Nicaraguan situation but is the home base of many of Koch's constituents. The journey has one puzzling aspect: If it is being made to monitor compliance with the Arias plan, why is the Koch delegation leaving Nicaragua on November 7th, the day the plan goes into effect? Donald Trump, the local builder who used to be a big Koch campaign contributor but lately has been the Mayor's most articulate antagonist, had a different question about the trip: "How can he go to Nicaragua when he can't even run the city of New York?"

"All human beings need to refresh themselves from time to time," Schwarz said in his letter to *Newsday*. "The Mayor . . . renews his strength to perform his unusually gruelling job by taking short trips to work in different surroundings." Koch, pointing out that he had taken only a few days off after his illness, said he was making the trip as a public service. "I'm certainly not doing it for the food," he told reporters at a news conference outside the City Council chamber, where he had just proclaimed Employ the Handicapped Week. He said he would demand that the Nicaraguan authorities show him "their worst prison." Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega was in New York this month to address the United Nations, but he did not ask to see the city's worst prison, although many critics of the local jail system would have been glad to offer nominations. The Mayor explained that because he, more than most public figures, has the ability to command media attention, his trip would make the international community more aware of what needed to be done in Nicaragua. When he was asked if there weren't others—Mario Cuomo, for instance—whose presence would have the same effect, he pointed out that the Governor had just returned from Moscow. "There are enough countries for all of us to go to," he said.

—ANDY LOGAN

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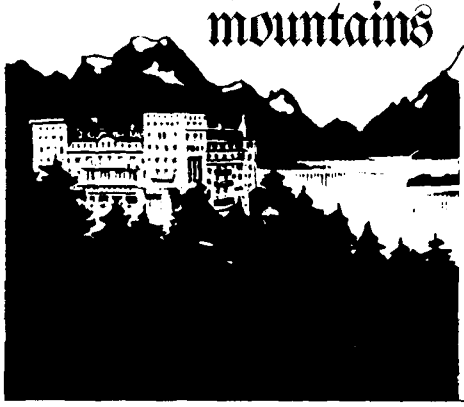

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THE THEATRE

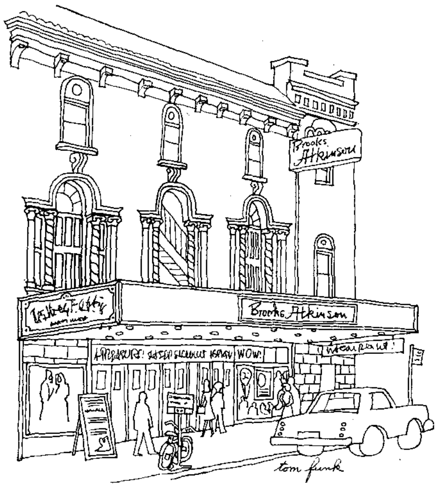
The Courtship of John Malkovich

LANFORD WILSON'S "Burn This," at the Plymouth, is, if little else, the occasion for a wild, astonishing performance by John Malkovich, as the manager of a restaurant in New Jersey who comes to town to collect the effects of his dead brother, a dancer, and remains to fall in love with the brother's roommate. The roommate is a young woman, a choreographer and dancer, who has shared a loft with the brother—her dance partner—and another young man, both of them homosexual. The action takes place in the loft, and at the beginning we see the choreographer, Anna, grieving for her partner, who has been killed in a boating accident. Before Malkovich, as Pale, enters, we also meet the other roommate and a well-to-do young screenwriter who wants to marry Anna. Pale, at first acquaintance, is high on cocaine; at second meeting, he is drunk; and finally he is in the grip of emotion so strong that even he is puzzled by it. Throughout, whatever the circumstances, he is violent and foulmouthed and a non-stop talker. The action runs almost three hours and could probably be shortened by at least one of them just by killing the obscenities. There is no question that Mr. Malkovich is a fascinating performer, with great sexual force, but in this instance he is not especially convincing; at least, I was always aware that there was a lot of acting going on. In fairness to him, it must also be said that there is not much of a character to play. The other characters not only are credible but are very well acted by Joan Allen as Anna, Jonathan Hogan as her suitor, and Lou Liberatore as the other tenant. The story is minimal.

To go over old ground, Marshall W. Mason, the able director, was until recently the artistic director of the Circle Repertory Company, where Mr. Wilson was the stellar playwright, and where Mr. Hogan and Mr. Liberatore are leading actors. Mr. Malkovich was a director, and he and Miss Allen were leading actors in Chicago's dynamic Steppenwolf Theatre Company, which took this city by storm several years ago. "Burn This" is, in a sense, the second collaboration of the two companies, the first being the far more successful revival of Wilson's "Balm in Gilead" a few years ago. The two plays have at least this in common—a plethora of words and an overabundance of monologues. Mr. Malkovich's character doesn't get many answers, although the others talk back and forth. The distinguished setting was designed by John Lee Beatty and lighted by Dennis Parichy, both of Circle Rep, and the good costumes were designed by Laura Crow.

MEANWHILE, back at Circle Rep, which is now under the artistic direction of Tanya Berezin, "El Salvador," by Rafael Lima, opened last week. This one is about a group of television journalists on assignment in the tropics. The talk of reporters and crew is tough and professional, and certainly sounds authentic; nevertheless, I kept waiting for the play to start. Except for occasional bursts of violence, most of them not seen but described, there is no through-action. There are a number of funny lines, though, and we are never in doubt that there is a writer aboard. The performance, under John Bishop's direction, is competent. The setting was designed by David Potts and lighted by Mr. Parichy.

THE Pan Asian Repertory's production of R. A. Shiomi's "Yellow Fever," four years ago, was one of the treats of the season. A funny comedy-mystery set on Powell Street in Vancouver, the "main strip" of the local Japanese, in the early nineteen-seventies, it featured Donald Li as a private eye named Sam Shikaze—in a tongue-in-cheek impersonation of Bogart as Sam Spade—and Carol A. Honda as the merry middle-aged proprietress of a café, where much of the action took place. Mr. Shiomi's "Rosie's Cafe," now at Playhouse 46, features Mr. Li and Miss Honda—both of them first-rate—in the same roles some twenty years earlier. Sam is a police cadet, and Rosie, young and cheerful, is just starting her business. The play is about her wistful love story and about Sam's successful cracking of his first case. Although "Rosie's Cafe" is not as sharp and satiric as "Yellow Fever," or as rich, it is just as charming. There is some political comment, the memory of the Japanese internment camps being still fresh and bitter in the minds of the older people. A white private detective who accuses Rosie's lover of being a jewel thief and succeeds in trapping him, is The Enemy, but Sam catches the real thief and agrees to a proposed partnership with the detective. A line near the end about "the beginning of a beautiful friendship" is a glancing reference to "Casablanca" and a salute to Bogart and the Sam Spade days to come. The acting by the almost entirely Asian cast is stylish and clear, under the direction of Raul Aranas; Dalton B. Leong, as Rosie's embattled lover, is especially good. The commendable setting, lighting, and costumes were by Bob Phillips, Victor En Yu Tan, and Eiko Yamaguchi, respectively. —EDITH OLIVER



The Dead and the Quick

BY the time you read this, it will be too late to see "Late Nite Comic," the second musical of the season to open and close on Broadway. A romantic comedy with music and lyrics by Brian Gari and a book by Allan Knee, "Late Nite Comic" preached the moral that if you have low enough standards you can find true love, and it gave me the worst case of church giggles I've had since "The Three Musketeers." The plot revolved around a manifestly untalented young man (Robert LuPone) who aspires to be a standup comedian and the whining, vulgar, and materialistic aspiring ballerina (Teresa Tracy) he flirts with one night in the hope of securing an introduction to Rodney Dangerfield. The tunes were generic but substandard, and the book ("I know I'm a child, David, but 'The Nutcracker'—I mean 'Swan

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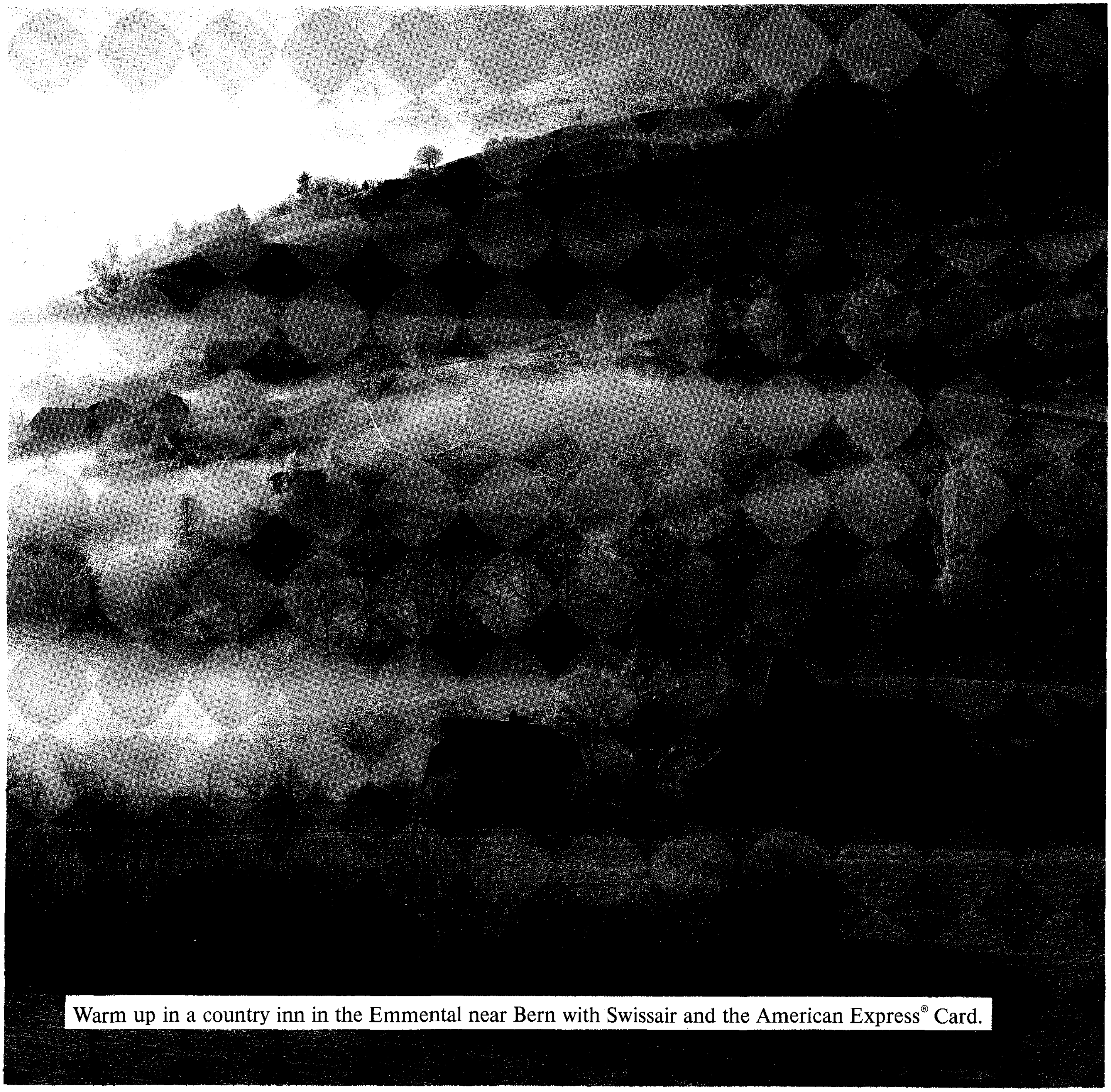

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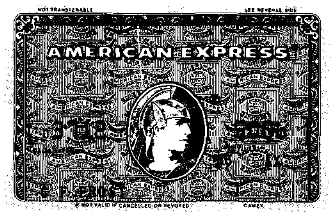

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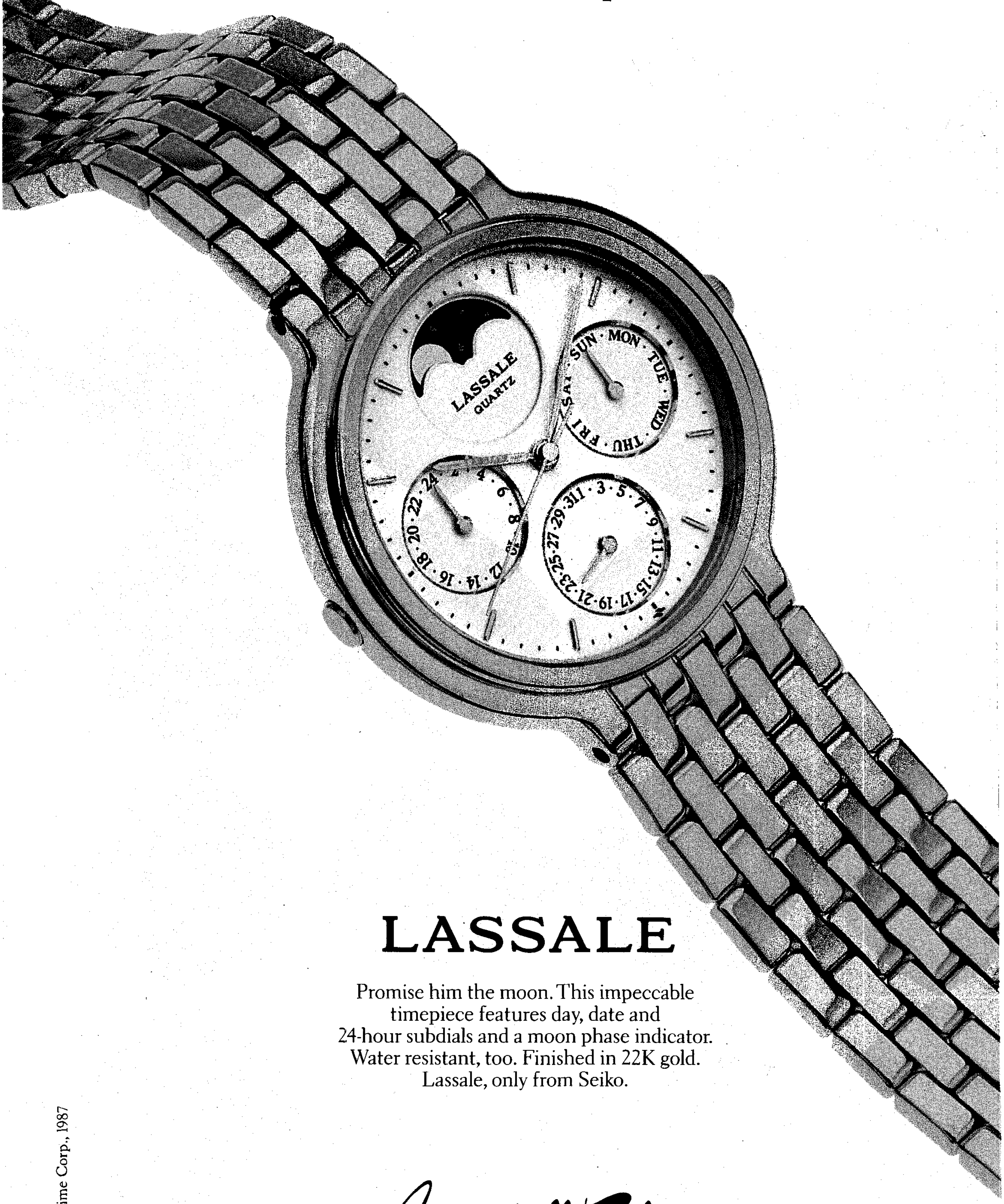
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Marshall Field's

Lake'—that stuff's so real to me!") consisted mostly of dialogue between Miss Tracy and Mr. LuPone ("I like ouching you." "Touching's nice. You know what's really incredible, hough? Bodies!") except when the hero spoke directly to the audience ("I felt like making love to her—right here! Right now!"). The tone of the evening, alas, was set by the lyrics. When the heroine belted out a love song about her former ballet teacher ("Clara's Dancing School")—

'Cause I learned about *danc*-ing
And I learned about tour jetés
And I know that it changed my life
in many ways—

you couldn't help wondering about a ewd subtext (wishing there was one) any more than you could miss the double-entendre when the scene where the hero first "scores" with the heroine was followed immediately by a big production number about "Having Someone." Even the costumes (by Gail Cooper-Hecht) seemed to grope ineptly after some notion of eroticism, though whether in jest or in earnest is impossible to say. The choreography (by Dennis Dennehy) moved between the mortifyingly vulgar and the mortifyingly routine, reaching its nadir when, in Act II, a not very Degas-like tableau came to life and a chorus of showgirls apparently dressed for "Swan Lake" proceeded to dance another ballet entirely—"Carmen," I think. As for the director, I don't know if I should mention his name: it was whited out of the Playbill, and a program insert announced that Philip Rose had "voluntarily" withdrawn from the show some days before.

It's worth noting, for the record, that "Late Nite Comic" was not one of those instances where your heart goes out to the performers onstage, where you want to weep for the skill with which an actor or singer tries to keep from an audience the truth about the quality of their material. When Mandy Patinkin and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio had to sing their way through "The Knife," the David Hare musical Joe Papp produced last March at the Public Theatre, you stood at the end and cheered for them—having sat through the show with your head in your hands. In "Late Nite Comic," the quality of performance seemed to match the quality of the material.

IF I were a standup comic—a great one, like Jackie Mason or Mort Sahl—I think it would bother me a lot to be written about by critics, because critics always quote comedians out of context: they have to. Describing what's happening in the theatre is part of their job, and when all that's happening is a man standing onstage and talking, what can you do but quote him? The trouble with quoting comedians is that it's difficult to write while you're laughing, so that what you find in your notebook when you get home is likely to be the least funny part of the show. And when you quote standup comics out of context the reader misses out on the buildup to a joke, which in most cases is what made it funny to begin with. Reviews of standup comics tend, therefore, to be full of parenthetical asides and one-liners (half-liners, really) that leave one thinking a comic is less funny than he actually is as well as feeling that one has already seen the show.

Take the appearance of the name "Weinberger" in the notebook I brought with me to "Mort Sahl on Broadway!," at the Neil Simon Theatre: it refers to the funniest joke I heard all evening. But I was laughing too hard to write it down, so I can't repeat it. And if I could, I wouldn't. And if I did, the gag line wouldn't be funny anyway; it would lack all the pacing and intricate layering of juxtaposition and irony that are so much a part of Sahl's artistry. This artistry—the way Sahl works on his audience—goes a long way toward explaining what a standup comedian is doing in a Broadway theatre in the first place. It's a phenomenon that requires some sort of justification, I feel, for, with the American musical dying all around us and the season just beginning, I can't help resenting these one-man shows. "Who are these guys," I ask myself—speaking (a little presumptuously) for the theatre professional now—"these university-campus and Borscht Belt comedians, to be able to fill our theatres and keep them lit when we can't?" I can't help feeling that the Jackie Masons and Mort Sahls of this world are horning in on my turf.

It can perhaps be argued that there is something innately "theatrical" about Jackie Mason's "The World According to Me!," at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre, on the ground that it requires Mason to be playacting all evening. It's true that throughout his routine Mason is forever speaking in the voice of someone else—and never more so than when he is ostensibly speaking in his own voice: when he

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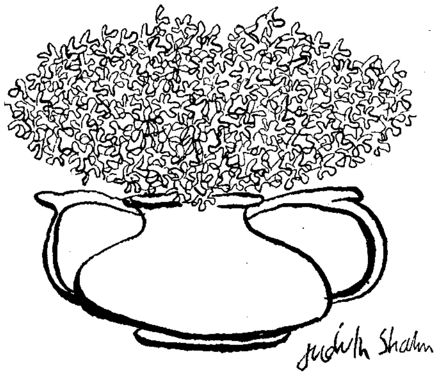
rails against this or that politician or ethnic group, denying fervently that he would say such a thing as whatever it is he's just said. "Does he mean it?" the audience member is left wondering. And because we don't know whether Mason means it, the humor is double-edged: it attacks both the object of his satire and himself, or whoever resembles the person he's pretending to be.

Mort Sahl's routine is even more complex: a put-on within a put-on. It starts slowly with predictable barbs lobbed at predictable targets—Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Geraldine Ferraro—but as the machinery of Sahl's routine gets rolling, as he talks, telling us this or that convoluted story about his "friends" in the Hollywood liberal establishment or his "friends" in the White House, it becomes less and less clear exactly who is putting on whom and where the moral thrust of Sahl's satire actually lies. It flits about—like Socrates' gadfly—settling now here, now there, but never long enough for one to be able to swat it or slap it down. The joke within an anecdote within a joke within a digression within another anecdote that may or may not be true: it's a kind of one-man Aristophanic comedy that leaves you laughing—uplifted—because it's so refreshing, yet not knowing where to turn for comfort or help. And it *is* theatrical. The fact is that you don't actually have to be in a theatre to get the full effect of Jackie Mason's wit and wisdom. I'm glad he *has* a Broadway show; but nothing happening in the audience or onstage at the Brooks Atkinson really requires you to be in a theatre in order to experience it. You can gain just as much from sitting at home and listening to the recording of "The World According to Me!"

The show at the Neil Simon Theatre demands that one be part of a live audience: you have to watch yourself and those around you being weaned gradually—now by seduction, now by



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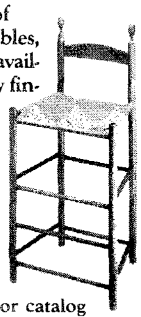

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reproach—from the expectable to the unexpected joke, and from the unexpected joke to the unexpected position. And Sahl is seductive—more polished, perhaps, than the underground comic members of the Stevenson generation will remember: his demeanor is full of little exclamation points (like the exclamation point in the title of his show)—show-biz walks and gestures and interjections, eye-popping faces and grimaces. But his getup is still the same—the sweater and slacks and open-collar shirt—and he still carries a newspaper; it isn't rolled, but dailies are thicker now than they were in 1958, and the guy who could roll up a copy of today's four-section *Times* probably isn't a guy you'd want to sit and listen to for an hour and forty minutes. Most of all, what has stayed the same about Mort Sahl is the particular brand of byzantine, timed-release wit he traffics in, which is always sharp but never hostile or mean-spirited.

Because Sahl is seen primarily as a political satirist, and because he once publicly supported Stevenson and now publicly supports Al Haig, a good deal of the hype surrounding his show has focussed on his own politics and the question of whether or not they have changed. For my part, I don't much care about Mort Sahl's politics: I think he's primarily a moral satirist, who hates orthodoxy or attitudinizing of any kind—from Republicans or Democrats, liberals or conservatives. Sahl reminds me of an exchange I once heard in the lobby of the small midtown theatre where Penn & Teller were playing.

"They're great, aren't they?" a young man said to his date.

"I don't know, I think they're sort of Yuppie," she replied.

"Yeah," the young man agreed. "The thing is, it's sort of Yuppie not to like them." —MIMI KRAMER

•

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[*From the Barre-Montpelier* (*Vt.*) *Times Argus*]

The cadets, whose names are being withheld by police and university officials, allegedly entered the Montpelier grocery store shortly after midnight. They then had a run-in with the store clerk and threw cookies on the floor, police said.

Officer Cheryl Goslant was called to the scene and escorted the cadets out of town, police dispatcher LuAnn Amaral said.

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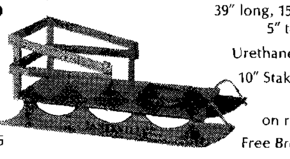

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Plain and Fancy

WITH "Das Rheingold," the Met has taken a second step toward the new "Ring" announced for next season. What sort of "Ring" it will be remains unclear. On the first night, this "Rheingold," like last season's "Walküre," lacked a distinct character. James Levine, who conducts, and Otto Schenk, who directs, seem to be feeling their way. Günther Schneider-Siemssen's scenery continues the manner of the "Walküre" third act: the forms are reminiscent of Adolphe Appia and Emil Preetorius, but the surface execution is elaborately naturalistic—wrinkled rockery everywhere. The Rhinemaidens don't swim but keep their feet on the ground. Rolf Langenfass's costumes are less quirky than those he designed for "Die Walküre." There's a lot of drapery to manage. Donner seems to have appropriated Loge's coppery-brown costume and wig, while Loge is a pixie figure with golden cornrows and big ears. It's basically a gray-and-brown "Rheingold," relieved by glinting water effects in the first scene and the gleam of Valhalla in the second and the fourth. Gil Wechsler's lighting observes another convention: whether the characters are subfluvial, subterranean, or out in the open, they are tracked by follow-spot operators overhead.

The new Wotan and Fricka are an improvement on last season's. James Morris has a splendid voice, one that fills the phrases nobly, grandly, effortlessly. Potentially, he is the great Wotan of our day. Since the San Francisco "Ring" two years ago, he has gained assurance. But on the first night of "Das Rheingold" he was too constantly loud. When he turned full to the audience at "Sein harren wir hier," at "Zu mir, Freia!," to cry his ringing D-flat, his ringing F-flat *tutta forza* into the house, he shed divinity and became an opera singer. He played an unusually young, earnest, ardent Wotan. He was mistaken, I think, at the end to let Fricka take the lead, coax a reluctant husband into entering their new castle. Wotan's music tells of firm resolve; "untold ages" (Wagner's phrase in the first sketch for the "Ring") of glorious, would-be benevolent rule pass before the god's guilt-racked brooding in "Die Walküre." (Another, small detail: this Wotan, when reminding Fricka that to win her he'd risked his remaining eye, gestured not toward that eye but at where his other eye, sacrificed at the World Ash Tree, had been. It's an old misreading of Wotan's line: Ernest Newman got it wrong; so did I in the first version of my "Ring" translation.) Waltraud Meier, an unusually young and beautiful Fricka, dared to sing softly, in pure, well-formed tones that made the audience attentive. Just once or twice, she pushed too hard.

"Who shouted 'Way to go'?"

Siegfried Jerusalem's Loge was disappointing. The lightness, lyricism, and airy charm he brought to the Solti concert "Rheingold" four years ago were gone. He shouted. Alberich took Franz Mazura to the limit of his vocal resources, which he used skillfully, potently. Mime (Horst Hiestermann), Freia (Mari-Anne Häggander), and the giants (John Macurdy and Aage Haugland) were acceptable without being outstanding. Anne Gjevang's Erda was unsteady. Timothy Jenkins gave a burly account of Froh's graceful solos. The Donner (Phillip Joll) was poor, and the Rhinemaidens (Mi-Hae Park, Diane Kesling, and Meredith Parsons) were no trio of well-blended Andrews Sisters.

One can report on the contributions of the individual sing-

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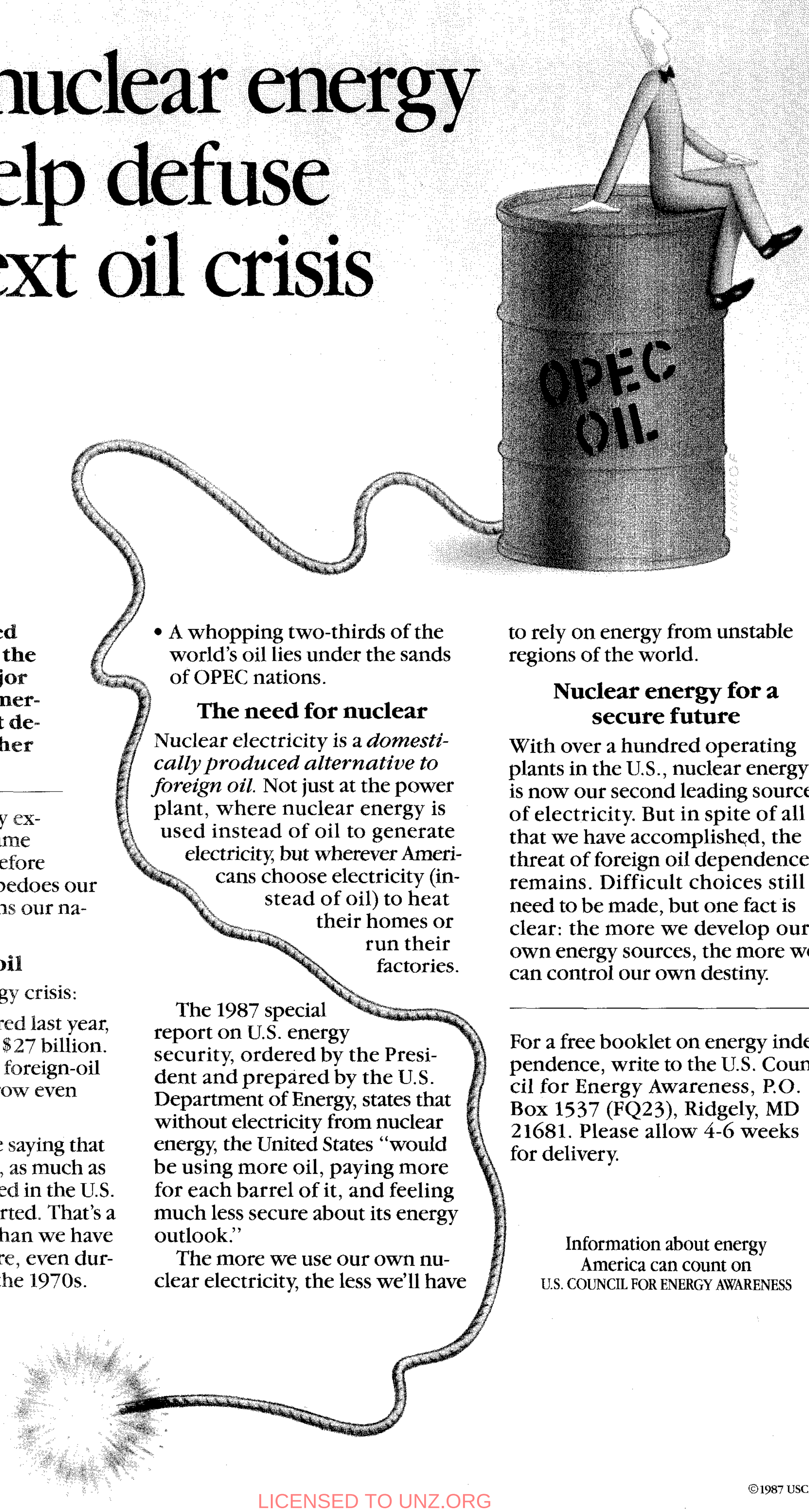

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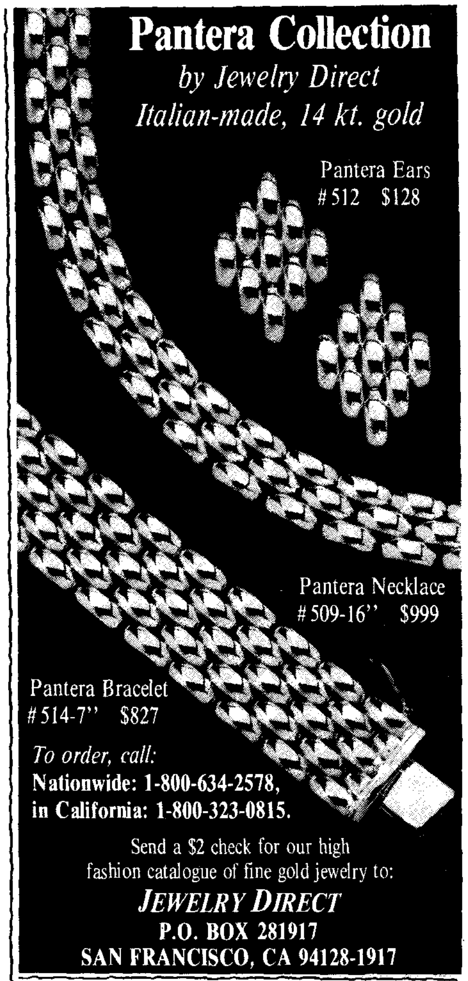
rs. It is hard to determine what they mounted to. Mr. Schenk's "blockıg" has its odd moments (his Erda is linky, not the majestic Earth Mother ı mysterious bluish light) but is for he most part quite conventional. It equires to be brought to life by singers /ith more vivid presence than these ıad. Something or other evidently tirs in Mr. Morris's Wotan; the 'Walküre" revival and the new "Siegried" later this season will no doubt how what. Mr. Levine's account of he score moved confidently. On occaion, he was overenthusiastic. The ong, soft surge of the start—a hunlred and twenty-nine bars with no narkings louder than *piano* and *immer ıiano*, and then four little swells each ancelled at once by another *piano* ndication—welled up too soon and oo strongly. The two passages where Alberich raises his ring to command he Nibelungs were earsplitting rather han awesome. The orchestra played ɔretty well, considering that during he week of final rehearsals and first ɔerformance it also had to deal with 'Otello," "L'Elisir d'Amore," and, wice each, "Ariadne auf Naxos" and 'Manon." Mr. Levine conducted the 'Otello" and the "Ariadne"s.

THE revival of "L'Elisir," which has been absent from the Met bills for six seasons, was distinguished by Carlo Bergonzi's Nemorino. The veteran tenor—he is sixty-three—gave a winning performance: gracefully phrased, warmly characterized, endearingly acted. His recitatives were lively and individual. His tones in "Adina, credimi" and "Una furtiva lagrima" were melting. He deserved a better frame and better company. "L'Elisir" is "la storia di Tristano" amusingly and touchingly retold in a village setting. The Met production, directed by Nathaniel Merrill, designed by Robert O'Hearn, and twenty-seven years old, is conventionally bright. Skirts are too short, heels are too high, and there is far too much ballet. The other performers—Sona Ghazarian (Adina), Brian Schexnayder (Belcore), Enrico Fissore (Dulcamara)—played comic cutouts, not characters, and sang without charm. Ralf Weikert conducted.

JOHN HARBISON'S little cantata "The Flight Into Egypt," which this year won the Pulitzer Prize, was given its New York première last week, in Alice Tully Hall, by the Riverside Symphony and the Canticum Novum Singers, conducted by George Rothman. It was but a partial première. In this carefully fashioned, precisely balanced score, Harbison uses four contrasting instrumental consorts: a double-reed quartet, a brass trio, strings, and (a consort in itself) a chamber organ. In the New York performance, the organ was all but missing: for some reason, its sudden entry and subsequent solo didn't happen; the sustained points during the chorus "He shall be called a Nazarene" went unheard. The rest was enjoyable. The work is a small, neat masterpiece in which science, instinct, and emotions conspire.

The Riverside Symphony is a young professional orchestra, founded in 1982, with excellent players in its ranks (several of them prominent on the new-music scene), admirable tone and balance, and vitality in its playing. It deserved this Lincoln Center hearing. Later in the season, it gives three Sunday-afternoon concerts (free admission) in Riverside Church; the programs include Charles Wuorinen's "The Magic Art" (an "instrumental masque" after Purcell) and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's Prologue and Variations. Mr. Rothman is a conductor of merit, but for anyone reared on Adrian Boult he is a disturbing conductor to watch: he favors huge, sweeping gestures involving arms, shoulders, head, waist, knees, and heels. He deployed them even in Ravel's fine-drawn "Le Tombeau de Couperin." Let me throw some of Sir Adrian's dicta at him (culled from the collection "Boult on Music"):

> Players and singers cannot be expected to perform with deftness and delicacy if they see their director behaving like a windmill.
>
> I would humbly suggest that if the conductor waves his hand and stick round in the air well over his head, it is not so easy to see as it would be just in front of him.
>
> Another thing to guard against is the foolish-looking habit of "giving" at the knees. It is easy to get a feeling that extra emphasis is put into a down-beat by a slight loosening at the knee, but a glance at anyone who does this will put an end to this belief.
>
> I think back to the technique of Arthur Nikisch: a stick of shining white that could readily be seen by everyone, actuated with the utmost restraint mostly by the thumb and two fingers, yet in a way that conveyed the pace and emotion of the music to perfection. . . . Behind the fingers was the wrist, and (rarely) the elbow to indicate the broader and louder effects. The shoulder never moved. The left hand amplified the right at the rare moments when the stick could not express all he wished. . . . Nowa-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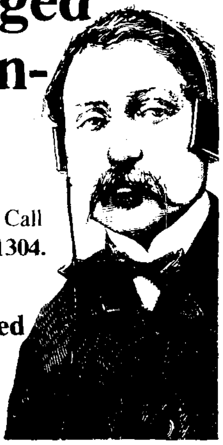

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days . . . *players must surely wonder what part of the conductor's anatomy they are expected to look to for guidance.*

Boult also said, "Though I occasionally enjoy looking at the technique of a colleague whose work I admire, I do suggest that to shut one's eyes at a concert is the real way to listen." Musical results, not the means by which a conductor obtains them, are what matters. I tried not looking, but continued to hear overinsistent, overbeaten performances in which suppleness of rhythm and dynamics and individual eloquence from the players were being compromised, it seemed, by the conductor's physical extravagance. Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto (Maria Bachmann a proficient but plain soloist) and Sibelius's Seventh Symphony completed the program. The Sibelius was grandly and sensitively conceived. Not literally, to be sure, but in a looser sense, Mr. Rothman is certainly someone worth watching.

THE American Chamber Opera Company revived Peter Westergaard's "Mr. and Mrs. Discobbolos" (1966) and Harbison's "Full Moon in March" (1979) for four performances in the Marymount Manhattan College Theatre. Neither work was well served. The Westergaard—a brief, cunningly fashioned fable, after Edward Lear, for soprano, tenor, and six players—was limply done. (A crisp performance, with Group for Contemporary Music players, has been recorded on CRI.) Harbison's spare, strange ritual after Yeats, beautifully scored (four singers, eight players), made more effect. The Swineherd, Michael Orzechowski, had some notion of projection, and the tenor Attendant, George Ellis, began to shape his line in the final chorale. But the others were feeble, and the music was rendered without much dynamic inflection. (A better performance, by the Boston Musica Viva, is available on CRI, but it is recorded with unclear vocal perspectives.) "Full Moon" deserves to be taken up by some adept New York ensemble—Speculum Musicae, perhaps. It needs little in the way of staging; Merkin Hall could well hold it.

OPERA AT THE ACADEMY put on six performances of Cavalli's "Calisto," in a lively but musically and dramatically confused presentation. The setting, a long, pillared gallery in the Academy of Art, next to the Public Theatre, provided striking

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eep perspectives, with plaster casts of he gods in the distance. But under the ɔw ceiling the singers sang too loud: ften shouted, boomed, and became in- omprehensible; regularly threw away he opportunities for rapid, telling ecitative. The accompaniment came rom two violins, cello, a pair of harp- ichords, and synthesizer. The edition vas a patchwork. Raymond Leppard's erforming version, uncredited, influ- nced it: his two-act structure, most of iis vocal distribution, one of the arias ie added, and the extra scene he com- osed were retained. But some of the nusic he cut was restored, and his lush ccompaniments were replaced with omething simpler. The program ioted that "the work of several exem- lary musicologists" had been drawn ɔn: Paul Daniel's for the modern-dress 'Calisto" performed by the Opera Factory and the London Sinfonietta in 1984; Jennifer Williams Brown and Maria Archetto's for the "Calisto" staged at the Eastman School of Mu- sic, Rochester, earlier this year.

The piece was done in an anony- mous English translation owing something to Geoffrey Dunn's. David Alden's conventional staging embraced the stock devices of opera enactment in our day: dark glasses, wheelchair, rows of hospital beds, office chairs whizzing about on casters, stripping. To turn the glamorous, ever-young Endymion into a frail, gaunt AIDS victim was perhaps a new touch; Pan after his encounter with the shepherd became another wheelchair occupant. (Cavalli's opera passes in a single day, but in this presentation time was stretched: the heroine passed from virginity, through gravidity, to motherhood.) Perhaps the Met in its forthcoming "Trovatore" should put Manrico into dark glasses and a wheelchair, so as to make the old piece meaningful to a modern audience. It would jar with the plot; so did much of what happened in this "Calisto," which was an exasperating mixture of emotional conflicts accurately observed and sharply imaged and insensitive recourse to cliché. —ANDREW PORTER

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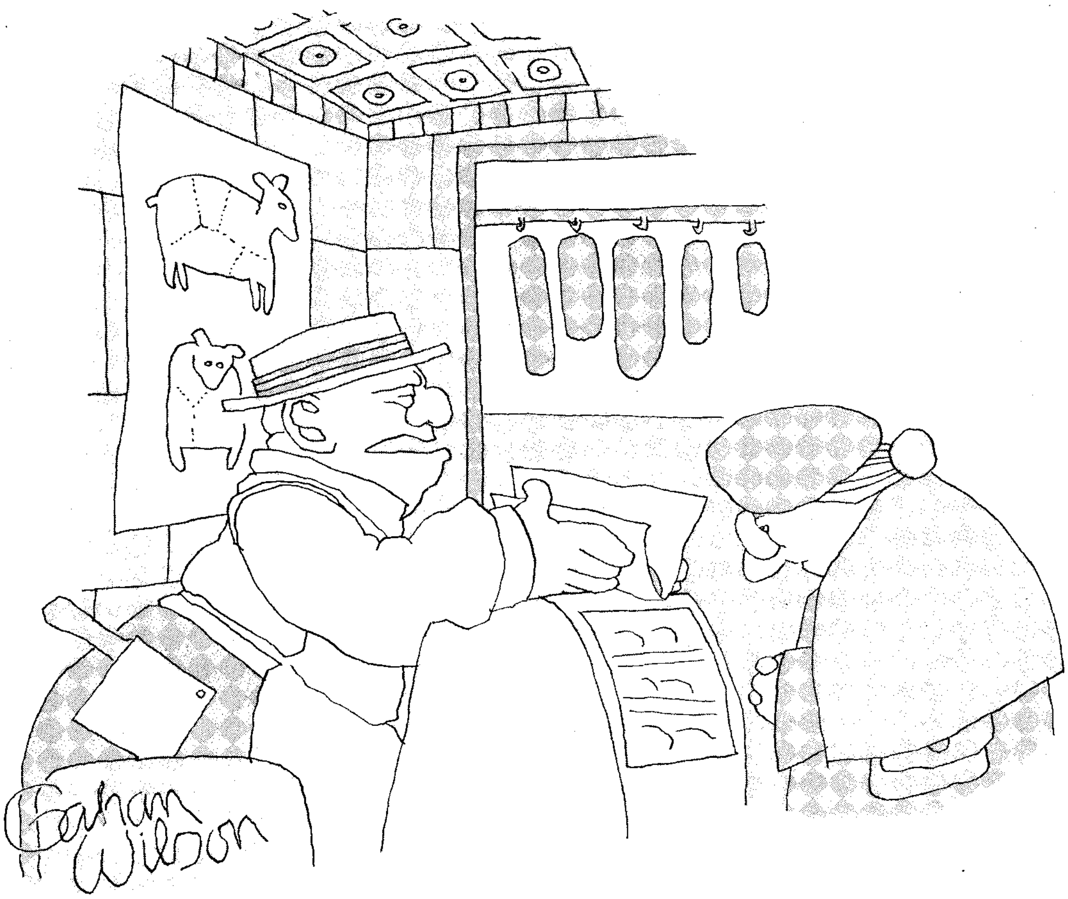
LUCKILY for Bret Easton Ellis and Tama Janowitz, we're all too hip to worry about the death of the novel anymore. In more idealistic times—say, from the late forties to the early sixties, when writers like Mailer spoke of the Novel as if it were the Grail—the publication of Ellis's "The Rules of Attraction" (Simon & Schuster; $17.95) and Janowitz's "A Cannibal in Manhattan" (Crown; $17.95) within two weeks of each other might have been the occasion of panic in the streets of Morningside Heights, or for hastily convened symposia in *Partisan Review*. Such cultural hysteria is, we now understand, sort of unseemly: bad art isn't such a crime against humanity that it requires show trials and public executions as deterrents. Besides, Mailer and Styron and Bellow and Jones and the rest never did quite cop the Grail, not one of them: each wound up with a career composed, in the normal way, of good fiction, bad fiction, and nonfiction, and got famous. If there's any defense for the carelessness and ineptitude of Ellis's and Janowitz's novels, it's that their authors are perhaps too young to have judged the ambitious, lofty-sounding older generation by anything but the very mixed results. In an extremely generous mood, we might forgive the younger writers for believing that the goal of their elders' activity was their celebrity (which was fully achieved), rather than their vision (which was not), and that the goal could be reached more gracefully and in every sense more economically without all that intellectual huffing and puffing, all that romantic, self-aggrandizing rhetoric about the novelist's art. O.K., Ellis and Janowitz never promised us great novels, so we won't judge them by that standard. Their novels promise nothing, and are as good as their word.

But even if we resist the impulse to charge these young writers with the end of literature as we know it, it's depressing to read them, and impossible not to feel a little nostalgic for earlier generations' grandiose ideas about the novel and for the earnest, dogged craft with which the postwar novelists tried to live up to them When Mailer surveyed his late-fiftie contemporaries—"the talent in th room," as he put it—in "Advertisements for Myself," even those whom he saw as non-starters in the race t the great novel had at least some styl and sensibility to show for their efforts; among the writers he considere minor were Capote, Baldwin, and Salinger ("the greatest mind ever to sta in prep school"). If these writers ar small, then Tama Janowitz and Bre Easton Ellis are minute, as undetectable as viruses; if it weren't for th flulike lethargy their works induce there would be no evidence that they' been in the room at all. The Ellis-Janowitz syndrome is, like Epstein-Barr, debilitating, murder to diagnose and so new that in some circles it' almost fashionable. Whatever this bizarre new strain of bad literature is it's highly resistant; it doesn't respond to critical remedies. These books are so indifferent to the most basic requirements of fiction writing that any attempt to apply the usual criteria of judgment leaves a reader feeling foolish, irrelevant, dull-witted the effort of determining what these things *are*—in the absence of the slightest indication that they ever aspired to be anything at all—is exhausting, futile, soul-killing work. Even E. M. Forster, who in "Aspects of the Novel" adopted a generous definition of the form as "a fiction in prose of a certain extent," might have been tempted, on exposure to "A Cannibal in Manhattan" and "The Rules of Attraction," to tighten up his categories a bit. These novels have a single aspect, one that Forster, for some reason, missed out on: their marketing. Forster talked about story, people, plot, fantasy, prophecy, pattern, and rhythm—the means by which an imagined world can be brought into existence, first in the writer's mind and then in the reader's. Ellis's and Janowitz's novels bypass the mind complete-



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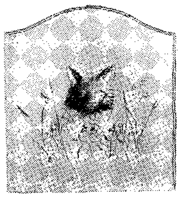

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ly; they exist only in the marketplace. Ellis's "The Rules of Attraction" is, like his first novel, "Less Than Zero," a formless printout of college-kid anomie. In the earlier book, Clay, a freshman at an Eastern college, returns home to L.A. for winter break and hangs out with other jaded, miserable kids who've been stuck with soap-opera names: Trent, Blair, Rip, Julian, Kim, Alana, Griffin. They drink, screw, do a lot of drugs, listen to music, shop, put each other down, and contemplate suicide, and then Clay decides, after ten or twelve pages of desultory introspection, that he'd rather go back to college than mess around anymore with his L.A. friends, and it's over. That's the book. For pattern and rhythm Ellis's narrator repeats, every few pages, the novel's opening sentence: "People are afraid to merge on freeways in Los Angeles" (sometimes shortened to "People are afraid to merge," for poetic force to the max). "The Rules of Attraction" varies this formula only enough to allow the book to be sold as a different product. This time, Ellis's setting is the Eastern college itself; the most significant effect this change has on his style is that characters address each other as "dude" much less frequently. And in this one somebody actually commits suicide, instead of just talking about it; it's not one of the main characters, though, and the scene occurs about halfway through, so we have plenty of time to forget about it by the end. The big departure here is the novel's "polyphonic" structure: rather than rely on a single stoned, aphasic narrator, "The Rules of Attraction" uses several. But the sound is strictly mono. The point of the technique, presumably, is that the characters are so locked into their own narrow perspectives on experience that they can't understand anyone else's feelings, and so, once again, fail to "merge." This would be a lot more persuasive (though still not original) if their voices didn't merge and blur in our minds as we listened to them. The narrators' thought processes and verbal styles are so nearly identical (not surprisingly, since their affluent backgrounds are, too) it hardly seems possible that these people could find each other incomprehensible. Ellis is simply being perverse—unless he really believes that the mechanical application of writing-class tricks will create meaning even if he hasn't bothered to invent characters and incidents to sustain it. His method suggests a hip

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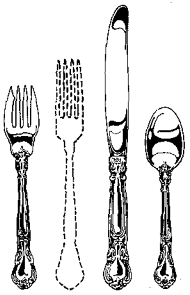

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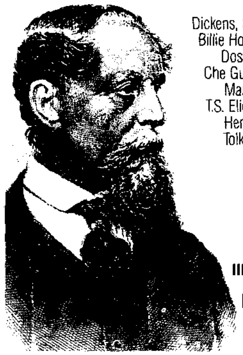

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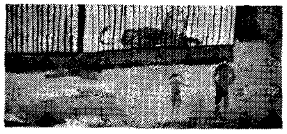

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update of Forster's most famous sentence: the message of "The Rules of Attraction" is "Only connect the dots."

To be fair to Ellis, this is the sort of novel that self-conscious undergraduate intellectuals have been writing forever. (He's a recent graduate of Bennington, the obvious model for the Camden College of his novels.) Its driving forces seem to be spite toward old lovers, self-pity (inflated into a hyperbolic philosophical nihilism), and an urgent desire to record all those terrific bons mots from four years of hanging out in cafeterias and college-town bars and trying to be "interesting." The book is suffocatingly full of dropped names: culture—rock music, literature, trendy painting—is consumed very conspicuously here, as though the author were desperate to exhibit his intellectual credentials, to establish a line of literary credit. Smart kids are prone to this kind of attitude, and are often tempted to show off their wit and taste in first novels, first films, whatever. Most are lucky enough to have these early efforts rejected: the novels are put away in drawers, the movies go on the shelf, and the would-be artists get the chance to outgrow their undergraduate personas before they've been exposed to the world. Thanks to his publishers, Bret Ellis is out there for everyone to see, getting killed by reviewers for books that in another, less venal time—that is to say, *any* other time—would never have been brought into the light of public scrutiny. The only reason his two raw, fumbling novels have been published is, of course, that they contain large, even toxic, doses of the elements that stimulate sales: lots of sex, lots of drugs, brand names on every page, and a cynical tone that's perfect for readers who want to lap up the decadent behavior and then feel righteously shocked at its emptiness. Bret Ellis's work is aimed, whether he's fully aware of it or not, at a younger generation of best-seller consumers, who get the same kinds of thrills from a new Ellis novel that their parents look for in Harold Robbins and Sidney Sheldon. He's going to need all the cynicism and druggy cool he can muster for a career of defending the merit of his work, just as those older blockbuster writers do, by reciting his sales figures.

ELLIS may be allowing himself to be exploited; Tama Janowitz is practically begging to be turned into a

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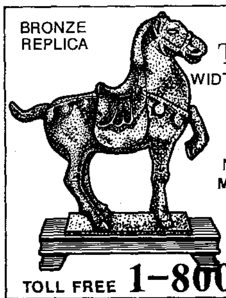

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mmodity. Despite her carefully cul- vated downtown-waif persona—she ves interviewers quotes like “I never ite figured out the skills to get along society”—she clearly knows very ell how the game is played, the rules attracting attention. She's eager ough to capitalize on the celebrity at the 1986 collection “Slaves of ew York” brought her so that she's t ashamed to see her name even on e feeble, interminable joke called “A annibal in Manhattan.” This piece product, an attempt at satire on ew York society from the perspective a semi-primitive named Mgungu, ay perhaps be a freshly exhumed ovel-from-the-drawer—an amazing ample of a writer's doing to herself hat Ellis's publishers have done to im. From the story “Snowball” in Slaves of New York”: “Years ago, in is artist days, he had written a ook. . . . The book was called *gungu*, it had little text. His wild nglish friends, decked in sixties' se- uins and satins, arrived in Manhattan nd posed for a series of pictures: stag- ering out of a studio-set jungle, in- ulging in birdlike mating rituals. he book was a spoof.” Except (un- rtunately) for the remark about the arcity of text, this is a fair descrip- on of “A Cannibal in Manhattan,” ven down to the photographs: the ook includes a center spread of mock- ocumentation, with Andy Warhol, tephen Sprouse, and assorted friends f the author posing in scenes from the annibal's life.

The photographs are dumb—in the ntentional, postmodern manner—but hey're more fun than the bloated text n either side of them. Janowitz's owers of observation and invention ren't sharp enough for satire; she has o settle for the tone of a “spoof.” Mgungu, who narrates, is a native of he island New Burnt Norton (the Eliot reference is meaningless) who's rought to New York by a sleazy eiress named Maria Fishburn. He hinks he's here to marry the heiress and perform at an international dance estival, but all that Maria really wants from him is the formula of New Burnt Norton's potent native hal- ucinogen. Mgungu spends most of his ime around the Holiday Inn, wondering where his fiancée is and meeting New York “types”: curators, rock stars, pizza chefs, deli owners, and the shady rich. He begins as a celebrity but becomes a fugitive after some of Maria's lowlife acquaintances treat him to a barbecue dinner that turns out

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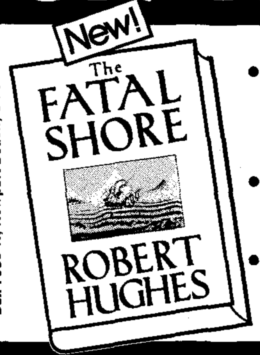

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to be the heiress herself. Tricked into cannibalism, he winds up in jail, where a sympathetic visitor makes him a gift of the story's moral: "After all, who in this country today is not a cannibal in some way or another, and why should you be locked up simply because you were more honest about your need for human flesh?" It's not much of a payoff after nearly three hundred pages of stale jokes and limply whimsical scenes. Janowitz can't even summon up the discipline, or pride, to create a consistent voice for her narrator: Mgungu is totally naïve when the plot requires him to be victimized, but he turns oddly knowing when—frequently—the author feels the need to crack wise about important subjects like the Hamptons and the New York Film Festival. She has an opportunist's notion of style. And, given the book's grisly central metaphor, the tone is shockingly light. If we're really living in a country—or, at least, a city—of cannibals, shouldn't we be a little disturbed?

Janowitz isn't. Like her cannibal, she's only half primitive: she's innocent of literary craft, but awfully canny about positioning herself, as marketing people say. There were stories in "Slaves of New York" that showed evidence of a real—if not very rigorously applied—talent: moments of sharp, unforced humor, some dead-on observation of artistic types caught with their attitude down. At her occasional, offhand best, she seemed like a natural, and that's how she's been sold. As with many "natural" artists, though, when Janowitz's imagination fails she's prone to falling back on easy devices, tricks as surefire as a hack's. Both "Cannibal" and most of the "Slaves" stories are written in the glib, soothing voice of a sitcom. Too often, her characters respond to the urban jungle in Mary Tyler Moore fashion: thwarted, they stamp their feet adorably and express their exasperation in the kind of cute one-liner which doesn't question the circumstances, only the outcome. Even their despair is ditzy. "I was sick of having fun," says Eleanor (a frequent heroine in "Slaves") at the end of a party she's thrown to console herself for having been ditched by her artist boyfriend. "I found fun very traumatizing, difficult even. In some ways it was more fun not to have fun. To me, having fun was almost identical to feeling anxious. I thought I preferred to sit at home by myself, depressed." This kind of irony, which Janowitz can't seem to resist, trivializes everything. She us anxiety and depression the way s uses crime and urban squalor—as i side jokes, daily trials that evoke f miliar responses. Is this any differer in either method or substance, from Neil Simon play that squeezes cor fortable chuckles out of older, middl class audiences by portraying them lovable underdogs? The cheerful d piction in "A Cannibal in Manha tan" of the city's weasels, lunatics, ar grinning killers betrays a weird sen of civic pride, an attitude straight o of an Ed Koch press conference: He we're New Yorkers, we're great, v eat human flesh.

Well, some of us do and some of don't, and it's not surprising that tho who do like to think of themselves "more honest" than the rest of us. A that this novel is about is a writ feeding greedily on her own reput tion: she hasn't been tricked into an thing, and she doesn't end up in jai Anyway, it's no crime to put out novel that's just a shameless advertis ment for itself. When Bret Ellis Tama Janowitz (and let's not forg Jay McInerney) drops one of the anomic bombs into the bookstores, th fallout affects only our more innoce hopes, the small, uncool part of us th still believes, as Mailer did thirty yea ago, that "five brave publishing hous (a miracle) would wear away a dro of nausea in the cancerous Ameri can conscience." This kind of flori idealism is one of the few aspec of the fifties that haven't been appro priated in the eighties by the voraciou postmodern temperament—maybe be cause no culture dealer has yet figure out a way to put a price on it. Th truth is, nobody's trying to *kill* th novel; it's just the target of a hostil takeover. —TERRENCE RAFFERT

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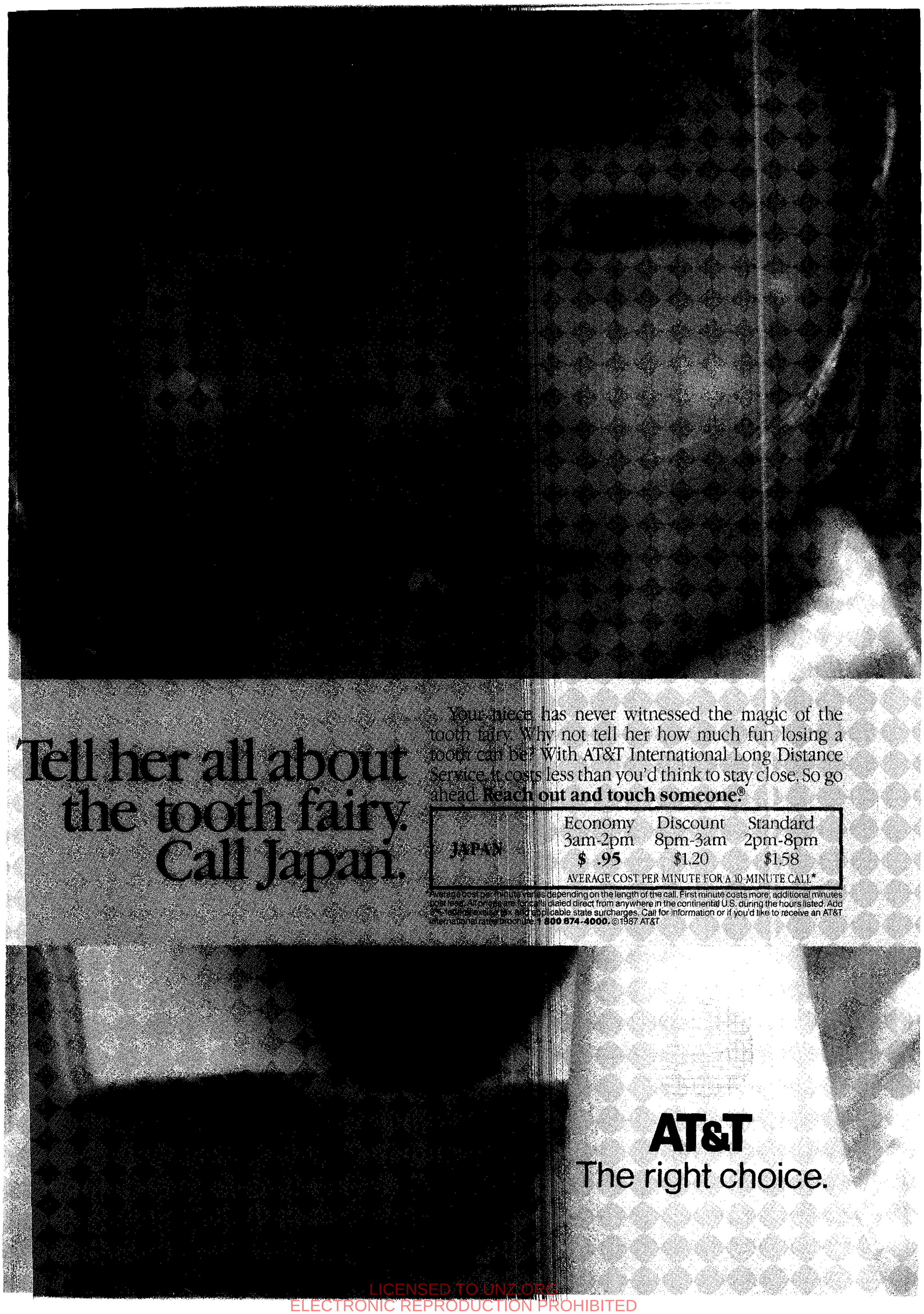

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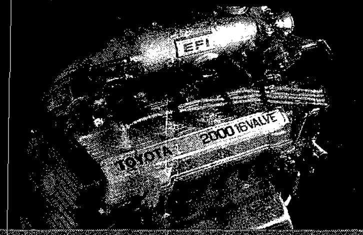

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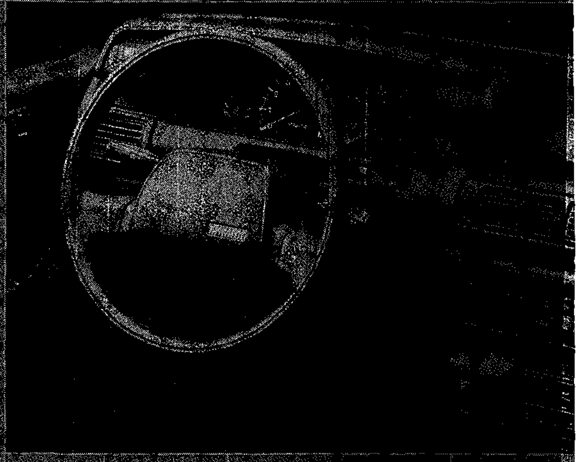

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